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[No. 222]

SEEING JESUS

BY

REV. FREDERIC H. KENT

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and wpward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christanity: and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N.Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

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SEEING JESUS.

"Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."—JOHN i. 46.

IF Jesus were to walk among men to-day and listen to the many voices lifted in dispute about him, would he not repeat that half-sad, half-reproachful question he asked of Philip, his disciple? "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me?" For, notwithstanding our familiarity with the story of his life, we do not know him; and the sign of our ignorance is this, that we are still trying to define him, still quarrelling because we cannot agree upon a form of words which shall adequately and exhaustively express his inmost nature. If we had begun to know him truly, we should have realized that it is no more necessary to define him, in order to receive the utmost benefit he can impart, than it is necessary to define a man in order to be enriched by his friendship, or God, in order to enter into the communion of prayer and worship, and receive the blessing of his love. We should have realized, too, that there is no more possibility of defining Jesus in ultimate terms than there is possibility of defining God or man or "the meanest flower that blows." Behind every name that we apply to him is veiled a mystery that baffles our thought.

Yet the mystery of Jesus' nature is no new or strange one. It is the same which meets us on every side and baffles all our knowledge. It is the one ultimate

10130

mystery of all being whose unity is affirmed in Tennyson's familiar lines:—

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies;
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower; but, if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

We study a lily or a violet, analyze it, peer at it through the lens, reduce it to the very cells of which it is composed, and at the end we know only that in it the mysterious something which sometimes we call life, and sometimes Nature, and sometimes God, is organizing that equally mysterious something which we call matter into forms of use and beauty. Where that force or energy or spirit begins or ends we cannot guess. It is as truly in the tiniest grain of pollen dust which carries in its atom the potency of new plants, as in the rootlet which threads its way to hidden moisture, or the leaf which drinks in the sunlight. We study man, and find a body more elaborately organized, lifted to more varied functions, kindled into thought and will and affection; yet, when we have done, we have only the same uncomprehended matter that was in the lily, and the same mysterious life using it, informing it, making it to live. There is nothing in the universe which is not related somehow to the One Life that is eternal. There is nothing in the universe that is not, in some sense, identical with Deity. And shall we, who cannot define that relationship in the case of the violet, who cannot part the human from the divine in any newborn child,—shall we flatter ourselves that we can parcel out the nature of Jesus into divine and human?

Shall we go farther, and assume to determine the eternal woe or bliss of human souls in accordance with their ability or willingness to accept the result of our dissection? As always, fools will rush in where angels fear to tread; but they who have acquired a just estimation of their powers will attempt a more modest task.

Our disputes about Jesus will never be settled, for the battle has to be fought on a field where human logic has no footing. We may hope that they will cease for want of disputers, as the beautiful face of that great Friend of men emerges from the mists of speculation which have so long concealed him. Beauty and truth are greater than anything that can be said about them; and the more we perceive them, the less patient are we with mere comment. The appreciative soul resents the garrulity which insists upon explaining a glorious sunset or a heroic deed, marring with words the silent communion by which its beneficent influence is imparted. Many volumes have been filled with what men have learnedly thought about Jesus; but from them all the loving disciple turns gladly to the peasants of Galilee, who saw him face to face and caught for the world the impress of his personality. What any one thinks about Jesus is unimportant, when there is Jesus himself before us. The important thing, as with every great spiritual helper, is to get into relation with him, to clear away the obstructions which choke the channels by which his influence flows to our souls. So the one adequate thing which can be said by one man to another about Jesus is what Philip said to Nathanael,—"Come and see." Nathanael was bewildered in a maze of other men's thought about the Messiah,

for whom his race looked so busily that they were blinded by the dust of their own speculation. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" he asked when Philip ran to tell him the Messiah was found. "Come and see," said Philip. "Can any divine thing come out of humanity?" ask men to-day, weary and disappointed with their long search for the soul's helper amid the dust of creeds. "Come and see" is the only answer. For argument and theory fail utterly to accomplish that which is the effect only of spiritual contact. We can help each other best by trying to make clear the figure which appeared so long ago to the people of Galilee and Jerusalem, so that we shall see him as they did, and feel the same influence that they felt.

But can we so see him? We cannot look directly into his face and listen to his voice, and we are apt to count this a misfortune. We feel that we should gain so much in certainty if we could only receive his influence without the mediation of other lives. Yet it may not be so. When we consider how blind men are to the beauties of Nature until some artist has transferred them to canvas; how little we notice the sanctity and worth of common life until some poet has extricated it from the dust and confusion and given a voice to the dumb divinity: when we remember how many people came within hearing of Jesus' voice, and passed on unheeding, unreleased from the bonds of ambition, care, and pleasure: when we consider all this, we may not be too sure that we should have been among those whose hearts proved good ground for the seed he scattered. If we are not to-day quickly sensitive to the spiritual influence of pure and loving souls about us, we might easily

have missed the significance of that unassuming figure then. For then as now we should have been preoccupied with business, politics, family cares, and social ambitions. To-day, if we look upon him at all, we see him as one who has survived, while all that was contemporary has vanished or endured chiefly by virtue of connection with him. There may be cause for happiness in the fact that the character of Jesus is reflected to us by a mirror which, while it gathers to a focus all the light that streamed from him, refuses to reflect any other figure. For thus, though the image may suffer minor distortions from the imperfections of the mirror, it gains intensity from the suppression of obscuring objects.

Advantageous or not, the fact remains that we see Jesus only as in a mirror. To behold him, we must go back to the first three Gospels. Yet we are not limited to the ideas of him which the writers of the Gospels consciously sought to impart. The stories which they relate contain much that is only opinion, colored by the writer's preconceptions and the prevailing ideas of the time. Many a man has become so confused by the inconsistency of the narrative with itself and with established principles of knowledge that he has given up in despair the attempt to form a just conception of Jesus out of the elements which the Gospels directly furnish. He has found himself at the end farther than ever from living contact with the life that *was* the gospel to those whom it touched. But beneath the surface of the narrative, shining through it here and there, are elements of an image of Jesus which combine into a perfect and consistent whole,—an image of beauty, truth, and power. In every page of the Gospels there is

revealed the impression made by Jesus upon human lives,--not only the evangelists, but the friends who walked or sat at table with him, the audiences which gathered, attracted by a novelty, the enemies who opposed him, the casual onlookers who cared nothing for him, but dropped an occasional comment. We can trace lives altered in their current. We can discover acts, friendly and hostile, inspired by his presence. We catch glimpses of emotions quickened by his words or by the mere glance of his eye. Out of these impressions, made upon the most varying characters, often inarticulate, often unconsciously revealed, often at variance with the writer's own opinion, there can be constructed an image of Jesus which is almost wholly free from the aberrations which always cling to individual opinion, and which is distinguished by a self-consistency rarely to be found in historical portraits or even in the conceptions we form of living persons. So long as we study only the acts and words of a man, we are puzzled by their seeming inconsistency, because we separate them in thought from the moving cause and the objects upon which they are directed. The same cause may produce many varying effects. The blow of a sledge will shatter a crystal, but weld into closer cohesion the particles of soft iron. The dawn that opens the morning-glory in dewy freshness makes the primrose fade and wither. The cause is one. The difference is due to the nature of the things upon which it is exerted. So the same spirit in a man will produce opposite effects upon the pure and the sensual, the noble and the base, the loving and the selfish. Yet the different effects will point to the same cause, and together yield a more adequate

conception of its character than any mere study of the methods and means through which it works. And he who has struggled in vain to reconcile the reported words and acts of Jesus to one another and to the known laws of nature, may find an unlooked-for simplicity and unity by studying his character as it is mirrored in the effects he produced upon different men, with the means and methods eliminated; while at the same time he avoids any question whether the reported means were credible or legitimate. Into this human mirror I invite you to look with me for the image of Jesus it reflects, remembering that we seek no ultimate definition, and that behind all our words the great mystery of all being remains. What was the impression produced by Jesus upon those who came in contact with him, and what must he have been to produce such an impression?

The observation is unavoidable that, so far as we can read the conduct of those men, it was a man they were aware of in their midst. They saw Jesus eat and drink, grow weary and sleep and wake refreshed, sorrow and rejoice, pray and give thanks, like themselves; and they never dreamed that they were dealing with a being of a different nature. Can you imagine men knowingly laying traps to catch God in error or inconsistency? Can you imagine Peter rebuking God, or Judas betraying God, or Pilate and the high priest putting God to death? Some, indeed, like Peter, took him for the Messiah; but no Jew ever thought of the Messiah as other than a man inspired by God. The populace of Jerusalem took up stones to stone him because they mistakenly supposed that he had declared himself to be God, so revolting was the blasphemous thought to their

minds. There is not a word or act in all the record of Jesus' lifetime which supports the supposition that any with whom he came in contact entertained so much as a surmise that he was other than a man.

So, too, in the traits of character which they marked, humanity was always present. True, even enmity failed to discover in him some things which are usually found in men. Hatred was baffled by the absence of common weaknesses on which it could lay hold. He could not be terrified or bribed or seduced. They felt that at once. But the absence of cruelty, selfishness, lust, fear, does not constitute a refutation of humanity. For these traits do not constitute the essence of humanity. These are the things which connect men with the beasts, — an inheritance not yet outgrown. The most truly human life is that in which these are reduced, conquered, rooted out. The distinctive traits of humanity are those which distinguish men from the brutes. They are thought, affection, self-control, intelligent purpose, sympathy, aspiration, faith, hope, and love. Whatever may be the speculations of theologians about the race, we are all agreed in this when we pass judgment upon persons. He who wins from his fellows the title "a true man" is one in whom integrity, self-control, sympathy, kindliness, humility, and aspiration for nobler life are predominant. Cruelty, selfishness, cowardice, and lust are qualities that earn for a man the name of brute.

The character of Jesus was ideally, if not characteristically, human. Its broken arcs may be traced in many a life, and not seldom a close approach to the perfect round. He surpassed, if you feel competent to the comparison, all other men who have ever lived.

Yet his superiority was of degree, and not of kind; the perfection of the human, not a contrast to what that perfection would be if actually attained. It was the very humanness of him which awoke the ardent feelings of men. We neither hate nor love that with which we have nothing in common, whether it be higher or lower than ourselves. The hate of evil men as truly as the love of good men for Jesus, the ardent loyalty and the no less ardent opposition, are indications of the inevitable and legitimate comparison which each made between himself and Jesus. Some reverenced what called out the best in them to life and emulation. Others hated what shamed and condemned the worst in them which they would not relinquish. But all bore witness to the presence of a pure and lofty human soul.

Nevertheless, strong as was this impression of his humanity upon those who knew him personally, it was, perhaps, inevitable that later generations of his followers should swing to the opposite view. For the reports of him handed down by tradition soon lost the warmth of personality which was so large a factor in his living influence, while they came into minds already possessed by a theory of humanity which afforded no room for such a character as his. Their view of Jesus had to be adjusted to accepted standards of humanity: they could not adjust their standards to him. He does not, indeed, fit into a conception of man which contemplates only the past, which has not even begun to suspect that weakness and ignorance and sin do not constitute the final summing-up of human nature. If the manhood of that day or even the better manhood of our own were to be regarded as the ultimate standard,

we might agree with the Christians of the third and fourth centuries that Jesus was more than man. But it is a different view of humanity which has won acceptance in our time. We are beginning to discover that "Man is not Man as yet." For, as in the lower realm,

> "Prognostics told
> Man's near approach, so in man's self arise
> August anticipations, symbols, types
> Of a dim splendor ever on before
> In that eternal circle life pursues."

The history of life, traced through the long struggle of the past, is throwing a light upon the future which transforms many an accepted idea. The signs are multiplying that man is not a fallen creature, but incomplete; not confined to the narrow actuality of the present, but already treading a path which leads infinitely upward; most truly characterized by capacities and traits which are but germinal as yet in aspirations and hopes. As the centuries pass, we see the race making great strides forward. Unbridled passion gives place to self-control, cruelty to kindness, indifference to sympathy, superstitious awe to clear-eyed reverence and love for moral worth and beauty. The number of individuals grows ever larger in whom the higher traits gain strength while the lower diminish. We are beginning to understand that the typical man is of the future, and we see already the heralds of his coming. It is into this view of man that Jesus fits, which he illuminates, giving positive form to our dim prevision. The mere affirmation of his humanity is inadequate. He was a man. But what a man!

Looking again into the mirror of the Gospels, let

us trace the positive image it reflects. The face we find there is very different from the sorrowful, downcast visage we have regarded as a portrait of the Christ. It is first of all marked with the lines of spiritual power. Never did men reveal more convincingly the influence upon them of a strong soul. The passion which a soldier of Napoleon's Guard put into the words "My Emperor" bore witness to no more dominating a personality than that which made his Galilean fishermen leave all to follow him. Nor was it his friends alone who revealed it. Each bears witness after his own nature. The crowds who heard him speak muttered astonishment at the voice which reached heart and conscience as with authority. Many men and women saw their sin drawn to the surface through the scum of complacency and sensual pleasure which had concealed it from their own sight, and shed bitter tears. Men of wealth and learning were penetrated by doubts of the worth of things which they had regarded as the highest good, and sought instruction of one who evidently possessed a treasure they knew not of. Men who sat in the high places of civil and ecclesiastical dominion were dismayed by the silent menace of a force which threatened to destroy their very strongholds, and, like the weaker everywhere, plotted against that which they dared not meet in open conflict. So convincing was the impression of might that he made that there seemed no limit to his scope, and there were found observers ready to declare his visible control over the forces of Nature, the demons of disease, even death itself. To unravel the accounts of what he did is impossible. The conception of the natural world which prevailed at the

time is so different from ours that it is hardly profitable to discuss whether he did or did not perform any specific wonder which is reported. Before a court that does not admit the existence of demons in the persons of the insane or epileptic the question of the casting out of any particular demon has no standing. But beneath all the narratives is the unquestionable fact that he made men feel that they were in the presence of a spiritual force to which they could assign no bounds. They could only acknowledge by act as well as word its superiority to anything in their experience, and even in the humiliating shadow of the cross his friends affirmed that he lived triumphant and his enemies set a guard before his tomb. Such witness to the presence of a mighty soul is more convincing than any tale of miracle.

Next it is clear that they felt that this mighty power was absolutely enlisted in the service of love. The world has known strong men, and it has known loving men; but when has it known a man in whom such power was wielded by such love? The story of the temptation indicates the way men felt about him. Not his own bitter hunger, not the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, could move him to use his power for his private satisfaction. But did any suffer the pangs of sickness, the burden of oppression, the gloom of sorrow, there was no doubt or hesitation. They hastened to place themselves in his path, sure that, if his eye but glanced upon their need, he would relieve it. They felt no need of influence or special pleas. The stranger, the outcast, the man whom men scorned, might and did come with as much confidence as the most deserving.

Like the divine love, the love of Jesus seemed universal, asking nothing about men's merits, but only of their need.

Nor was it only the exertion of power which cost nothing that they learned to expect of him. He would *share* their sorrow and their pain. He would stand between them and their enemies, and receive the wounds meant for their hearts. As to his power, they could not assign limits, so his love transcended imagination. They came to think he would meet the ultimate test which Isaiah had suggested, and be willing to take upon himself the guilt of the whole world, with all its heavy punishment. Upon this conviction of limitless love in Jesus rests, I believe, the whole doctrine of the atonement, which as an historical event no theologian has ever been able to explain, but which is at least comprehensible, if it is seen to be a human attempt to express the belief that infinite love had come into the world.

Finally (for I can do no more than sketch outlines which any who will can fill from the material at hand), this supreme love was rooted in faith, or rather trust, in God. Even if it could be shown, what no one believes, that not one of the sayings attributed to Jesus is correctly reported, we should still be sure that he and his followers were conscious that trust in the fatherly goodness of God was the root of his life. For through every attempt to record his utterances this thought shines out. The truth which he illustrated by the lily of the field appears in almost every one of his discourses. He must have said many noble words which have not been preserved; and it is significant that, whenever his followers tried to tell what he had said, this one thought predominated.

It was the only clew by which they could explain or understand his patience, his sweetness, his unswerving fidelity through the shock and turmoil of his life. Upon them was laid the duty of living a life like his, and by an unconscious selection they seized upon the truth which it most concerned them to fix in their hearts. It was the rock upon which their lives must be founded, as his had been founded; the assurance which, through every experience, had maintained his soul in the peace that passeth understanding.

Here, then, in its main outlines is an image of Jesus which is ours beyond dispute, forever undisturbed by the most destructive criticism. For it is wholly independent of the historical accuracy of the Gospels. Did Jesus work miracles? Did he use the exact language of the Beatitudes or the Sermon on the Mount? The answer, interesting and valuable as it is in many respects, does not affect this vision of him. The means and methods by which he produced his lasting impression on men are not in question. Even though the historical accuracy of the Gospels should be rejected, their very existence proves that there lived a man who by some means exerted an unmatched and definable influence upon the minds of men, and from that effect our minds are led inevitably to the character of him who wrought it. Nor was it upon their minds alone. It reached their deepest motives, and transformed their lives. It made them trustful and loving and strong in their turn. It imparted to them a trust in God which bore them up through danger and sorrow and persecution. It filled them with a sense of life for which the grave had no terror. It touched them with its contagion; and made them love men and do them mighty service. As we study these

lives, new lines of grace and truth and beauty shine out in the life that was their inspiration. There comes to us across the ages the influence of a warm, living, loving spirit. His unshaken trust in God strengthens and confirms our struggling faith. His wide-embracing love fires us to new devotion, and sheds about us the cheering rays of the realized ideal. With growing faith and love the divine strength flows into us as into him, and we become able to serve men as he served them, relieving their misery, casting out the demons of pride and selfishness, inspiring them with hope and courage. It is this that makes him precious. We shall not care to define him when we become conscious of help and inspiration flowing from his life into ours. For we shall know him as we know the friends who walk spiritually with us, himself the greatest friend of all save God, his Father and our Father, the reality and the blessed influence of whose divine companionship with every soul is shown in the character of Jesus of Nazareth.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

Three of Dr. Savage's Books

PILLARS OF THE TEMPLE
By Minot J. Savage

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 3-4; pages, 226; price, 90 cents *net;* postage, 9 cents additional.

THE foundation truths of religion cannot be too often emphasized or repeated, and the chapters of this book go far to clear up confused popular ideas about the subjects dealt with. To such confusion of thought the author is an eager foe: one of his unvarying aims has ever been to seek the fundamental truths of religion and to present them in words so terse and simple and theologically untechnical that equivocation or misunderstanding is impossible. The pillars upon which this temple is reared are sturdy columns of rational religious conceptions which devoutly concern the development of the higher life.

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By Minot J. Savage

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CAN any good thing come out of Nazareth? Come and see," is the quotation on the title-page of this book, and with this query in mind the writer traverses with his reader the ground made historic by the life and teachings of the Man of Galilee. With deep sympathy and appreciation, and with an equally strong desire to clear the path of entangling after-growths, the author guides the way, forest-through, to the open of a cloudless and sunlit vista of the great and essential principles of the religion of Jesus.

MEN AND WOMEN
By Minot J. Savage

Size, 5 1-2 x 8; pages, 179; price, 80 cents *net;* postage, 8 cents.

A REVIEW of the respective parts that men and women play in the organization of society, their individual responsibilities and duties, their relation to each other and to their children, involving also the further questions of divorce and of woman's growing independence. The book traces the successive steps from love and marriage through the various influences and opportunities which, rightly used, lead to the ideal home and all the noble influences for good which emanate therefrom.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 223]

FROM THE OLD FAITH TO THE NEW

BY

REV. WILLIAM M. BRUNDAGE, PH.D.
REV. WILLIAM S. MORGAN, PH.D.
REV. THOMAS CLAYTON
REV. JOHN L. ROBINSON
REV. VICTOR J. GILPIN

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

FROM THE OLD FAITH TO THE NEW.

BY REV. WILLIAM M. BRUNDAGE, PH.D.

MANY people utterly fail to understand what a transition from the old faith to the new actually means. To them it seems like the giving up of all faith whatsoever, the absolute renunciation of religion. Let me illustrate the attitude of such persons.

Shortly after I had withdrawn from the church of the old faith in Albany, of which I was minister, and had begun Unitarian services in the theatre, I was approached in a public place by a good woman who was an active missionary worker in the city, in the following startling manner: "I am very glad to see you, Dr. Brundage, to ask you how you feel since you have given up the Lord Jesus Christ."

"But," I replied, "I have not given up Jesus Christ."

"You have certainly given up serving him."

"Not at all," I replied.

"You have given up loving him and honoring him, have you not?"

"Most certainly not. I never loved and honored Jesus Christ more than I do to-day."

"Why, I do not understand what you mean. Have you not become a Unitarian?"

To this good woman to become a Unitarian meant to cease to be a Christian.

A few weeks after this interview I noticed in my audience on Sunday night a prominent business man who was an officer of one of the most influential churches of the city. I wondered at his presence at our service, because I felt confident that he could

not be interested in our liberal gospel. Two or three days afterward he came to me, and explained why he had been present.

"I feel that I owe you an apology," he said. "When I saw it announced in the paper that you were to preach on the subject, 'What must we do to be saved?' I said to myself, I think I will go down and hear how easy the Unitarians make the way of salvation. Since the Unitarians give up all religion, their idea of salvation must be exceedingly lax. But, my dear sir, I find that I was mistaken. Your way of salvation is a —— sight harder than ours. We have some one to stand between God and ourselves and save us, while you teach that a man must save himself. Instead of being the easiest way of salvation, yours is the hardest way of all."

I was born and trained in a church of the old faith. My father was a clergyman in that church. I was taught as a boy to believe in a supernatural infallible Bible, in the Trinity, in the fall of man, in the vicarious atonement for sin, in salvation through faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, and in an eternal hell of conscious torment for all who rejected this salvation. When as a boy I sometimes doubted the truth of certain incidents in the Bible, I was urged to crush that doubt as "devil-born." I could find no peace of mind until I could affirm in an ecstasy of faith, "I do believe."

As I grew older and had become an orthodox minister, these doubts became more and more insistent, and the struggle to overcome them more and more difficult, until at last I learned that to doubt was not wrong, provided it was the means to a noble end, provided it led to a more worthy faith. Slowly but steadily the old supernatural sanctions of religion

gave place to new rational sanctions, and I won a faith for myself, a faith that at last was my very own.

Take, for instance, my belief in the Bible. I began with the old faith in an infallible book, consisting of the Old and New Testament scriptures, but I was not satisfied until I had selected from these scriptures a Holy Bible, a literature of moral and religious power that inspired and uplifted me. The greater part of the Old Testament and much in the New simply dropped out of my canon of Holy Scriptures. I could find no spiritual value in it. The noblest of the Psalms, the great passages of the Prophets, the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables of Jesus, and much of the teaching of Saint Paul remained. The heart of the old Bible remained, appreciated now as never before, and together with this my Holy Bible began to include the noblest passages from the gospel of Buddha Gautama, from the Bhagavad-Gita, from the writings of Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, and from the great poets of the modern world. Again I began to see that, while the doctrine of the Trinity might be true as far as it went, it did not begin to go far enough, it did not begin to exhaust the fulness of the manifestations of God to man. A threefold manifestation of Deity! Why not affirm a million-fold manifestation?

Or take the doctrine of the Incarnation. My church was perfectly right in declaring its belief in the Incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth. But this truth simply pointed to the fact that God had incarnated himself in all men; that wherever goodness, truth, and love are found, God is found. I began to appreciate at last what Jesus meant when he taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven." Certainly, Jesus is the world's Saviour in the sense

that he revealed the only way whereby men can be saved,—the way of self-sacrificing love.

I began to see that the only rational justification of punishment for sin lies in the fact that the punishment is remedial. That the wrong-doer will be, must be, punished, as long as he persists in doing wrong is what the old doctrine of eternal punishment really means.

Through my study of physical science I learned to appreciate the meaning of natural laws, so that henceforth belief in miracles in the old sense became impossible, because they would imply an imperfection in the divine order. And so I might go on illustrating the transition that was going on within me from the old faith to the new. I kept on using the old phraseology, but into the old phrases I read a new meaning. Religion became a profounder reality to me with every passing year,—religion in the sense in which Jesus taught it and lived it, religion in the sense of love to God and love to man. My church signified to me fellowship in the religious life.

It was not until I had been for ten years a minister of the church of my parents that I was at last aroused to a thorough appreciation of the falseness of my position. The awakening came about in this manner. I was celebrating the communion of the Lord's Supper with my people, using the ritual enjoined by my church, when I came to these words in the prayer of consecration: "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a *full, perfect,* and *sufficient sacrifice, oblation,* and *satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.*" Suddenly it came to me as it had

never come before how different was the sense in which I was using these words from the sense in which my people were using them. Dared I, in that place, frankly explain to those fellow-worshippers just what I did not mean, and make perfectly plain to them just what I really meant? I had not consciously preached anything which I did not believe; but, on the other hand, I was in this solemn service using words which I did not mean in the plain sense in which they were originally used, in the sense in which most of my fellow-worshippers were now using them.

That moment I heard a voice sounding in the depths of my being, just as clearly as Jean Valjean in Victor Hugo's great romance is represented as having heard a voice speaking to him when he had made up his mind that he could not go and confess himself the true Jean Valjean, and the words I seemed to hear were these: "Thou hypocrite!"

Had I not solemnly promised when I was ordained to the ministry in my church that I would conscientiously teach only the doctrines that my church approved,—doctrines which I had affirmed then and there that I most sincerely believed and which I had at that time accepted in the sense in which my church held them? I certainly no longer believed them in that sense. What right had I then to stand there as a professed teacher of the old faith? I was a hypocrite. I would not presume to judge another in my place, but I must condemn myself. I rose from that service with one plain alternative before me, either I must withdraw from the ministry of my father's church or confess myself to my own conscience to be insincere. It did not take long for me to decide what I must do. I must withdraw from the ministry of my church. Just at a time when I felt that I had a gospel

to preach best worth the preaching, a gospel which I was convinced that great numbers of my fellow-men needed, I must leave the ministry and enter some other profession. For where could I find a church that would receive me upon my own terms, that would require of me no creed subscription whatsoever, that would leave me perfectly free to preach what I believed to be the truth? Where would I find a religious fellowship based not upon uniformity of belief, but upon the sharing of a common religious spirit?

I did not then know that there was a fellowship of this character in existence. I was familiar with the writings of the great leaders of the Unitarian movement, but I had been taught that modern Unitarianism was nothing but a cold, lifeless cult, whose adherents, while very cultured people, possessed no vital religion.

I attended the National Conference of Unitarian Churches that met in Saratoga in September, 1894, and was present when the new basis of fellowship in this Conference was unanimously adopted: "These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man, and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and practical aims."

I came away from that Conference with a joy and gratitude beyond all power of expression. Here was a religious fellowship in which I could feel at home, —a religious fellowship which guaranteed to every member, minister, and layman alike perfect freedom of belief, while it fostered the truest religious spirit and personal and social righteous character.

It was a happy day in my life when I was cordially

admitted to this church of the new faith. Do you wonder that I count it a high privilege to belong to the first religious organization in the history of the world to throw wide open its doors to earnest truth-seekers of all creeds, to welcome to its working fellowship the reverent agnostic as well as the confident believer? Is it too much to claim that the poet's dream already begins to be realized:—

> "A nobler church shall come, whose covenant word
> Shall be the deeds of love. Not Credo then,
> Amo shall be the password through its gates.
> Man shall not ask his brother any more,
> 'Believest thou?' but 'Lovest thou?' And all
> Shall answer at God's altars, 'Lord, I love.'
> For hope may anchor, Faith may steer, but Love,
> Great Love alone, is captain of the soul."

FROM BAPTIST TO UNITARIAN.

BY REV. WILLIAM S. MORGAN, PH.D.

THAT I love the good Baptist folk goes without saying. I shall never cease to love them. I owe them all my early training. They started me upon my ministerial career and a thousand unconscious influences from this splendid body of Christians have entered into my life. The greatest thing I owe them is that I am a Unitarian. They always insisted they had no creed save the Bible. I studied this book faithfully, and became a heretic.

One hesitates to speak of the "Why I became," as it is a chapter from the holy book of the soul,—a story one is prone to keep from public gaze. Both my grandfathers were parsons. I early had the itch of prophecy. To be a foreign missionary was the height of my ambition. This grew upon me until, when once there was a strong appeal made to us in college to engage in this type of work, I almost made a public vow of consecration to undertake the task. My first sermonette was an attack upon Unitarianism. Unitarians were holding services in the Wellington School in my native town, and scattering their insidious literature abroad, and there was a holy zeal burning in me to offset this sort of thing.

The church in which I commenced preaching was a Calvinistic Baptist church, but even then I was not over-orthodox. Though quite willing to admit God had elected some to salvation, I was not prepared to admit any had been elected to damnation. I was called to book more than once for this heresy. Once I committed a very grave sin. I had declared to a

few of the members of the Young Men's Saturday Evening Meeting that I did not believe the blood of Jesus either in the literal or any other sense had efficacy to wash away our sins. An influential member said I should be excommunicated, but they forbore me.

In the Welsh college I attended theological discussion ran high. Once we were studying Ephesians in the Greek Testament class, and the question of universal salvation came up, and my attitude caused much bitterness of feeling among some of my classmates. My greatest sin, however, was the repudiation of the deity of Jesus. An earnest young man and a good scholar came to my study, and said to me that, since I was really an atheist, I should come out to the open, like Mr. Bradlaugh. I tried to prove I was not an atheist. It availed nothing. "Come out, like Bradlaugh. Tell the world that you are an atheist, and we shall all respect you," were his final words on the subject.

The greatest burden one's heresy has to bear is the accusation of superficiality. I was indeed bent upon escaping this as much as possible. In the Yale Divinity School I must look into the Bible more thoroughly. I must read the Old Testament carefully in Hebrew and the New in Greek, and follow carefully the mazes of exegesis, and peradventure this awful heresy that tormented me would be cured. The more I studied, the worse it grew. I soon learned that the theological course was no cure for heresy. I took as much work in philosophy as my time would allow. "Beware of metaphysics. It spoils the preacher," said one of my teachers. The notion of the deity of Jesus did not return to me. One Sunday evening a student from the graduate department defied two

of us to find any passage in the New Testament declaring the deity of Jesus, and after much searching he had us floored. A few weeks before graduating, one of our number, with the instinct of a census-taker, went the rounds to find how many of the graduating class believed in eternal damnation, and he could not find one among these thirty-seven men who were to be sent out as ministers from Yale Divinity School.

There was one other chance. Over and over again I had heard it asserted that the actual experience of life was the best cure for scepticism. I took a Baptist church. At the end of the third year of my ministry I knew there was something wrong, and many others knew it. A liberal brother from a neighboring town came to see me. He had said some radical things from his pulpit to which objections had been made. "Don't label your heresy," was my advice. "Do as I do: give them heresy in such a fashion that the very saints will not suspect it." Bad ethics, you say. I say very bad. But this is the only way in which hundreds of orthodox pulpits can be held. When it was whispered abroad that in my ministry of three years I had not preached a sermon on the blood of Jesus cleansing us from all sin, I saw clearly I had been fully discovered.

Once more it must be tried. In the larger city people are naturally more liberal. Alas! my hopes were dashed to pieces. I must give it all up. "Why do you not become a Unitarian?" said a colleague of mine,—we both were teaching in a small theological school in New York. "I am sick and tired of the whole business," I replied. "I neither want Unitarian nor Trinitarian systems," I continued. One day this good friend brought me word that a Unitarian minister

wanted to see me. I went to see him with glad heart. He was of a philosophical turn of mind, and he soon persuaded me that there was no such thing as a "Unitarian System." It was a shame for a man of my training to throw it all away or even to start anything along the individualistic line, when there were men and women of the same ideals as myself.

I left the Baptist fold without bitterness. I well remember the morning I went to Philadelphia to preach in Dr. Furness's church. I never knew until that morning the meaning of Bunyan's pilgrim dropping his pack at the cross. I was a free soul. I could preach that morning without mental reservations. I was now at liberty to build from the foundation. And many a time since, as I declare the living truth as it is experienced by a living soul,—truth whose ultimate test is my own reason,—when I think of bygone days, they seem very far off and very unreal to me. But joy unspeakable has been mine in the ministry of the liberal gospel.

FROM TRINITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL TO UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL.

BY REV. THOMAS CLAYTON.

It is not easy to describe just how or why one has come to make such a change in belief and church relations. It necessitates so much of the objectionable personal element. One cannot write such a story in the third person. Also some of the influences that carry us forward or change our direction are easily forgotten as the years roll by and new experiences crowd in upon the soul. However, I will do my best to recall the particular strokes of the paddle that gradually carried my canoe over from conservatism to liberalism in theology, and from the Trinitarian to the Unitarian stream.

Perhaps the change really began with the "Higher Criticism" which at first I distrusted, being a sincere believer in the plenary inspiration of the Bible. Hitherto, to me its statements had possessed divine authority. All my life I had studied the Bible, and mastered it as few do. The first book that impressed me was Dr. Gladden's "Who wrote the Bible?" It made me feel there was more I needed to know about the Bible. I bought other books, some more liberal, sought out review articles, and did much reading and reflection. I was soon convinced the Bible is not inerrant, that I must not and could not trust to it alone. I had also been reading along other lines. Astronomy was always one of my favorite sciences, archæology another. I had long refused to believe in man's late advent on the earth, or that all men had descended from Adam. I believed the days

of Genesis meant periods, and that the flood had been local. The story of the Fall to me had never been historical. I had regarded it as a kind of parable illustrating the origin of sin.

As the universe widened and deepened before growing power of the telescope, my idea of God expanded until he became too sublimely great for me to conceive of him as being incarnate and confined in the person of a Galilean peasant. Prayers to Jesus had always been improper, and tainted with idolatry; and my doubts regarding his equality with the Father gradually changed into certainty that such a doctrine was wrong.

Still it was hard for me to rid myself entirely of the old notion that such ideas were possibly a temptation of the devil, and revealed my own lack of religious experience. Did I not need more earnest prayer and consecration? I often tried to secure it on my knees until I was weary and my head swam. The long hours of mental wrestling that continued for years none but God and myself will ever know. But the work of transition went on. I was helped greatly by association with many able and scholarly ministers who were very liberal. Gradually I went beyond them, taking positions they seemed to consider very radical. The theory of evolution was forced upon my attention. Many of our friends accepted it, while I was prejudiced against it. Still I felt impelled to study it carefully, because I was unwilling to be ignorant of the reasons why other people believed differently from myself. This trait I have since come to be grateful for, because I have found so many people willing to deny and condemn things they know little or nothing about.

Reluctantly and unwillingly I retreated step by

step before the coming light. I feared to accept what I could not deny, until after reading John Fiske's little book, "The Destiny of Man," all my fears vanished, and I accepted in a measure the wonderful doctrine of evolution. Then arose the old difficulty about miracles, which would not be put down; but I was now fairly settled in my views as to the prerogatives of the human reason, which taught me that the laws of God as revealed in the universe have never wavered in the least from the beginning of creation. All along this painful path of intellectual transition I had been haunted by the fear that I might become a traitor to my life-long religious experience. It had clogged my steps and postponed many decisions. I had long possessed what Prof. Hale has gone elsewhere in search of, and suffered from anxiety lest my radical tendencies should destroy it. But that fear has long since passed away. I know better now.

For some time I was anchored on the idea that the Gospels at least were authoritative, and could be relied upon to give us the real position of Jesus regarding the Deity. I well remember one night some twelve years ago spending several hours upon the discourses of Jesus, in which he is made to say much regarding his relation to the Father. The first reading confirmed my previous belief that Jesus did not claim for himself what modern Trinitarians claim for him, but to strengthen conviction I resolved to read it over again. Suddenly the thought came to me, supposing he is made to claim equality with God, would that decide it for me? Could I rely upon the verbal accuracy of these records, or even upon the memory of the original authors? What modification of these Gospels had there not been *before* the im-

perfect manuscripts we now have were written? The reply was decisive. I could not build so tremendous a doctrine upon so uncertain a foundation. Where, then, was the final authority? Must I trust reason alone? Then I felt as though my frail bark was adrift. I had neither certainty nor authority. Was there even a God? At this the bitter tears flowed; but my heart promptly answered: Yes, my God and Father who loves me, who has thus far guided and kept me, is still with me, and I shall yet see light in his light. "Though I walk through the valley of shadows, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." None of us need wonder that so many ministers and others draw back from so terrible an ordeal, and decide to neither read nor think lest they be driven to surrender the hopes and opportunities of a lifetime. As for me, it was necessary to go on even if it meant despair and death. To know the truth I was prepared for any kind of sacrifice. One of the books that seemed to help me much at this period was "The Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy," by John Fiske. To me he has always been what Charles Darwin wrote of him, "the clearest thinker I have ever read."

Gradually the darkness passed away. My crude ideas assumed more definite forms, and things began to look more natural and real. What had I left? My God was nearer and dearer, more real to me, than ever before. I saw him and felt his presence everywhere. His love quivered in the atmosphere and smiled upon me from heaven and earth. The Bible was still the most precious of books; for how wonderfully it described him, and gave the noble thoughts and experiences of men who, like myself, were seekers after God. Jesus to me remained the fairest of all

the sons of men, the dominating personality of my life and ministry. Humanity was even nearer than before, and every soul my kinsman in the family of God. Evolution and human history written upon rocks, in gravels, and upon tablets, revealed the working out of God's sublime plan for the glorification of mankind. I became satisfied, established, and, like John Henry Newman, can say, "I have not had a doubt or misgiving since, as to my convictions being the right ones."

Another great problem now faced me. What must I do? Remain in the Orthodox Church, and keep my convictions on many things to myself, as others I knew were doing? or, Wesleylike, strive to bring the church over to my point of view, or step out into an unfriendly and critical world? What can laymen know of the considerations that influence the actions of many sincere ministers? I have often heard the clergy severely criticised for continuing to act as though they believed in old dogmas generally considered to be dead.

To many it looks like stepping out to be crucified like the Master,—to be misunderstood and misrepresented, sometimes ostracized and forsaken of friends, to lose living and ministerial standing. What more natural than that friends, when consulted, should advise a man to act cautiously? I was advised to stay where I was and keep some of my opinions to myself, to gradually sow the seeds of liberalism, and wait until the time was ripe for more aggressive agitation. The denomination itself was liberal. There were no doctrinal tests, only testimony; but, while I can agree that others may stay where they are, I have felt it was best for me to give up the ministry or go to the Unitarians. For a time I could not

decide which to do; but sickness led me to resign my church, and then, assured of a welcome and a home among the Unitarians, I joined this body.

My reception has been kind; and, if former acquaintances grant me but faint recognition, they at least do not antagonize me, and many whom I never knew formerly heartily wish me Godspeed.

To sum up in a few words: I came over to the Unitarians to be honest with myself, to let the few who may be interested know just where I stand and why; to serve the cause of progressive truth in the spirit of the Master, who said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth."

FROM PRESBYTERIAN TO UNITARIAN.

BY REV. JOHN L. ROBINSON.

I WAS reared under the old regime of the Orthodox Church in Mississippi. During four consecutive summers, the revival season, I went to the mourners' bench and mourned in deep sincerity for my sins, which I knew were many and unmistakable.

Strange as it may seem, when I made my surrender to the will of God at one of these revival meetings as to my spiritual birth, I was born a Unitarian; and perhaps, stranger still, I did not know it for fifteen years. For the past four years I had been praying to "the three in one and the one in three"; but at this crisis I had lost sight of all such confusions, and my thoughts were centred on God the Father, the Maker of all things, to whom I owed allegiance. To him was my surrender made, and neither Jesus nor the Holy Spirit were in the range of my mental or spiritual vision.

But of this experience I thought nothing at the time. It did not occur to me that there was anything unusual in it. I did not then know that there was such a word in the dictionary as Unitarian, and it was years afterward before I knew that there was a body of Christians who were called by that name.

Shortly after my conversion I joined the presbytery and began to prepare for the ministry. In a few years I was called upon to assist in a revival meeting, and did most of the preaching. I was not ambitious enough to preach what was called a "set sermon" on the Trinity; but once or twice during

this meeting, and a number of times afterward, I felt it my duty to show that the three persons had equal power, but there was only one God. But I never succeeded to my own satisfaction. Whenever I left the church and reflected upon the sermon, I felt as though I had either proved three Gods, which of course is an absurdity, or else I had simply juggled unconsciously with words.

After leaving the seminary and entering upon my first work, I took up the study anew as time and opportunity afforded, and sought what light I could from a careful study of the New Testament. The first thing that struck my attention was the genealogies in the first chapter of Matthew and the third chapter of Luke. Both accounts start out to give the genealogy of Jesus, and they give it through Joseph. Not a word is said about the genealogy of Mary.

All through the New Testament Mary and Joseph were referred to as the parents of Jesus. The word "parents" is referred to three times in Luke, third chapter. Mary twice in the same chapter speaks of Joseph as the father of Jesus. Not a word does she say about Joseph being the "reputed" father or "supposed" father of Jesus. Not a word do we find in the Old Testament about the doctrine of the "reputed" fathership of Jesus. In many places in the New Testament he is referred to as the son of Joseph. When I was studying these passages, I had the feeling all along that the doctrine of the reputed fathership of Jesus is unworthy the belief and promulgation of honest, educated men.

Another argument for the deity of Jesus was drawn from the statement that he was born of a virgin. There is not a Greek or Hebrew student who does not

know that the word translated "virgin" means "a young woman," whether married or unmarried.

I objected to the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus, not only because I believed it is against the plain facts of history,—the leader of nearly every religious belief is said to have been born of a virgin,—but because I believed it dishonored the holy institution of marriage. When children are born in holy wedlock, how can they be referred to as having been "conceived in sin," since nature's way of bringing children into the world is God's way of creating an immortal soul?

Furthermore, as the world has always been in the sorest need of just such strong and inspiring characters as Jesus was, it seemed to me that God is under obligation to continue the miraculous method, if that was the best method. I saw no reason why he should produce one and stop short of a hundred million. Why not all? I next examined Jesus' own words. He said, "My Father is greater than I." This did not seem to me to be the language of a god. He said, "I can do nothing of myself; the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." This did not seem to me the language of a god. Jesus prayed. Did he pray to himself?

I was reminded of the fact that Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." Yes, I thought, and it is a noble truth. One in thought, one in purpose. Jesus also says, "And the glory which thou hast given unto me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one."

When I reached these conclusions, the chasm between me and my orthodox brethren was, I feared, too wide to be spanned.

The next question was, "What shall I do?" I

really wanted to remain in the church where I was, if I could do so honorably. I wrote to one of the leading ministers in the church, stated plainly my theological beliefs, told him I thought the best thing for me to do was to quietly leave the church, and asked his advice.

In his reply among other things he said, "Stay where you are." I was happy to get this letter. Thought the question was settled, and that I would stay where I was.

But this peace of mind was short-lived. I saw afterward that the rank and file of ministers and workers were of a different opinion, and that one of two things was open to me,—either to remain and bring upon myself a trial for heresy, which has never had any attractions for me, or else leave the church in a quiet way. I chose the latter.

The next question was, "Where shall I go?"

I knew in a general way the position of Unitarians, and my beliefs corresponded with theirs. But I thought of my old friends and relatives. From their standpoint, entering the Unitarian fellowship would be considered radical and anti-Christian.

I thought of entering the Congregational Church. I knew it had the reputation of being orthodox; but I also knew that it had a very liberal element in it, and that the liberal element were undisturbed whenever strong enough to maintain themselves. I thought I might be as liberal as I wanted to be, and yet would have the credit among my old friends of being orthodox. I knew from my own reading—especially from the testimony of Dr. Horace Bushnell that the word "Trinity" was used in all sorts of senses, —that it was a sort of catch-word or shibboleth. No matter in what sense you used it, you were considered

orthodox. Well, a man has but one life to live, and to the end of time it will be to me a source of deepest joy and satisfaction that I put aside all subterfuges. For better or for worse, for weal or woe, I was a Unitarian.

The truth from the Unitarian point of view is a source of never-failing joy to me. How glad I am to believe that, while all the peoples of the earth are searching after God in their feeble way, God is also seeking them, and Paul says he is not far from any one of them!

I was told, before entering the Unitarian fellowship, that Unitarians were very intellectual, but unspiritual; that they cared more for science, art, and literature than they did for religion. I have found them deeply spiritual. I have not seen a people more deeply interested in the great principles of righteousness, our kinship with God, the ultimate triumph of good over evil, and man's share in the responsibility of saving the world.

They do not pretend that they have reached the goal of perfection in practice or belief. Their motto is, "Onward and upward forever."

I believe truly that I have struggled upward into a larger truth, and I can say, as the Indians said when they threw their burdens down on the banks of a little stream in the south, "Alabama—here we rest."

FROM METHODIST TO UNITARIAN.

BY REV. VICTOR J. GILPIN.

My difficulties began during the first term of my college course. I had gone down to Victoria University to study theology after putting in two years at circuit work. Having been brought up in a Methodist parsonage library, I was well acquainted with Fletcher, Cooke, Wesley, Pope, and the other standards, and rather thought that a university life was simply a luxury. But I was not long in college before I felt that there was something in the universe that Pope's "Compendium of Theology" said nothing about. Random remarks caught my ear. I remember one that was made by a Senior at supper-table, to the effect that Huxley wasn't the fool that the preacher made out he was. Drummond's "Natural Law" sent me to the library shelves for more of his stuff, and I took down the "Ascent of Man" bound in a pleasant cloth. The evening shadows of a late day in October had closed round me when I wakened myself from a three hours' dream through that poem of evolution by a sudden nervous clap of the cover boards.

After that it was hard work to get down to Contra Conomen and the binomial. I had discovered a new path in the universe. My biology lectures were now entering upon cellular structure and comparative anatomy. Into these studies I plunged with enthusiasm, and before the end of the year I was some sort of an evolutionist, and had begun the work of reconciling Genesis and science. In my second year a course in geology established me in my new thought,

and I got the creation story snugly fitted into six geological periods. During the following years I read widely in science.

But my Bible study strangely perplexed me. I had no thought, as yet, that evolution was so significant as to the primary doctrines of the Church. But in a lecture one day on Thessalonians our professor remarked that Paul evidently was mistaken as to the time of the coming of Christ. I was thunderstruck and stared rigidly at the speaker, while my pencil dropped from my fingers. It is true, then, after all the denunciation of the preachers. Higher criticism wasn't the false, shallow thing that it was made out to be.

I can hear yet, after many years, the echo of that slamming book in the vacant library and that cedar pencil clattering to the floor.

The interest that I took in Old Testament and New Testament theology after that startling experience in the lecture-room stimulated me to a study of the philosophy of religion. I consequently left university with a changed theology. I understood now why the Jahwe of the 109th Psalm was not my God.

The really interesting time came when I began to preach a vital religion to my congregation. In my new cause-and-effect universe I could find no place for the Atonement nor the Everlasting Punishment as I once held them. I wandered here and there, searching for some constructive message; for I resolutely preached that there must be some natural connection between what a man did and what he experienced.

Thinking that the people were entitled to know what was going on in the theological world, I delivered a number of addresses on the Bible as literature,

explaining the stories of Genesis, the structure of Job, and the significance of Jonah. I undertook to reinterpret conversion, sin, and holiness; but my congregation was slow to follow. They began to be afraid of my new ideas. Special prayer was offered for me at a prayer-meeting, and I began to feel my peculiar position. One steward got up in a meeting and wanted to know whether I was sent there by Conference to preach King James's Bible or one of my own get up. An old lady refused to let me into her house when I called, and a young man who was dying left word that I was to have no part in his funeral service.

All of this saddened me and led me to feel that I was unwise in saying anything out of the way. Not being able to preach the old theology, I endeavored to put my new thought in a less striking way; but it was futile, and the upshot of it was my being closely examined at District Meeting as to my theological beliefs, and subsequently being stationed at the most distant mission of the Conference. But this proved a Godsend. I subscribed for a number of magazines and books, and read day and night. Up to this time I held the deity of Jesus as a sacred truth. Although not accepting the doctrine of Atonement in the exact words of the discipline, yet I regarded Jesus as a divine person, delegated for the salvation of men.

The *Outlook* came to my place at the time, and I read Lyman Abbott's articles on evolution, but was impressed with the weakness of the article that dealt with Jesus. I think that here occurred my first doubt regarding his deity. In the *Outlook* was an advertisement from Massachusetts, stating that Unitarian literature would be sent free to any applicant. I sent my name to this Massachusetts Alliance and a series of A. U. A. tracts came to me through the

post-office. None of them dealt with the question of the deity of Jesus, however; and, happening upon Mathewson's "Resurrection of Christ," I was bolstered up in my old faith for over a year. Some literature on the subject came at last, and I was shut up in close quarters with serious work on hand. That year Encyclopædia Biblica came, and I kept ravelling away. But, the more I grew in knowledge, the less was my preaching acceptable to my congregation. It was irksome to me to preach my universal religion in an ambiguous manner or dilute it with the old. Finally I became convinced of the untenability of orthodox teaching, and set to work to reconstruct matters. This was a difficult matter for me. I consulted with a Presbyterian minister who had developed as I had, and he said that nothing could be done. Another minister told me to preach the things that were common to the old and to the new. But about that time I came across Beecher's advice to young ministers not to preach any half gospel, but to swing the whole sword. Also, I was impressed with the effective sermons that Unitarian ministers were preaching, and one evening I lifted up a bunch of A. U. A. sermons and said to my Presbyterian friend, "There is gospel enough there to save the world."

Some of my ministerial friends said it was a crime to create an unrest among the people by talking about minor things such as the origin of the Bible; but I felt that there were no minor things, and that no truth was a negligible quantity.

I spent an afternoon with a Sunday-school superintendent whom I tried to bring to see that religion was life. We talked freely about the Old Testament and other problems, and I thought, by the way he

followed me, that a good afternoon's work had been done. But just before we parted he said, "Well, there are many things we cannot understand; but I suppose that, if we attend to the great thing, the salvation of the soul, God will not shut us out of heaven." I was sadly taken back, and through this and other like experiences I saw that there was little hope of accomplishing my work inside the church. New wine could not be put into old bottles.

On moving to a new circuit I resolved that I would try a different way and work along other lines. I would make no reference to Biblical questions nor to any discoveries of science. I would preach the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. So, after spending a number of weeks getting acquainted, I endeavored to infuse life into my prayer-meeting by taking up some subjects of vital interest, and preached a series of sermons on Religion and Life. Immediately the symptoms of unrest I knew so well began to appear. The people did not understand me. I was reminded that the old religion was good enough.

I was now fully convinced of the truth of Unitarian theology, but was doubtful about the Unitarian Church. An article in our church paper gave a very gloomy picture of Unitarianism in England, and a friend of mine who had visited New England for a summer declared it was a cold, intellectual affair, and my misgivings were increased. I succumbed to the temptation of living a quiet literary and social life in the Methodist Church, preaching in a mild and unoffensive way the simple truths that everybody believed. But a deep, hungering nature, which I inherited from my father, refused to be fed on this thin diet, and from this time on I never faltered. I was attracted by the quality of the Unitarian life as

presented in her classic churches, and quiet but thorough-going interest in modern problems. The unfettered freedom that belonged to the Unitarian minister was the thing I envied, though, more than anything else, and I resolved to have it. I sought a Unitarian minister, and his kindly interest and deep sympathy with a person in my position quite won me.

A little further correspondence on the matter ensued, and I one day, in the latter part of October, started to pack up. The tragedy of those last few days will never be forgotten. Letters from home and entreaties from friends combined with the deep sorrow of our own hearts to turn the day into night. People with wondering faces came to call and asked us what was the matter. Were they not paying enough salary, or did we not like the place? A letter came from a distant minister declaring I must not leave, as it would not be long before the Methodist Church would be quite liberal. But, amidst packing boxes and general disorder, I sat down, wrote out my resignation to the chairman, finally informed my Board, and in the early soundless morning left the Methodist parsonage of Sheffield, and with it the Methodist Church. In that hour of dramatic silence, riding down the country road, with fields of mist shelving away to the south, I threw off the impossible load of traditional theology forever.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 224]

A LITTLE CATECHISM

OF UNITARIAN FAITH, FELLOWSHIP, AND ORGANIZATION, IN TWENTY-THREE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

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1. WHAT IS THE FAITH OF OUR UNITARIAN CHURCHES?

Our churches affirm the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

2. WHAT ARE THE ARTICLES OF OUR FAITH?

The Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the Spirit of Jesus, Salvation by Service, the Progress of Mankind onward and upward forever.

3. HAVE WE A CREED, THEN?

We have great beliefs; but nothing in our beliefs is to be construed as an authoritative test. We cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and practical aims.

4. WHAT MAKES US "LIBERALS" IN RELIGION?

To hold four principles supreme:—

(1) Freedom of Reason and Conscience our Method in religion,—instead of authority and tradition;

(2) Fellowship our Spirit in religion,—instead of sectarianism;

(3) Service our Aim in religion,—instead of salvation for self;

(4) Character our Test in religion,—instead of ritual or creed.

5. Are All Liberals "Unitarian" in their Belief?

By no means. Whoever holds those four things supreme is a Liberal, whatever his denominational name. Whoever holds them supreme, he and we are essentially one in the spirit. Beliefs, being of the mind, must needs differ, and therefore names and organizations; but on these four Principles, as on corner-stones, slowly uprises the Church Universal, the One Holy Catholic Church.

6. What is the "American Unitarian Association"?

It is the executive and missionary arm of the Unitarian Fellowship. It was organized in 1825, "to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity."

7. What does it do?

It supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, publishes books, tracts, and devotional works, and sends out sowers to sow new fields of the Liberal Faith.

8. What is the "Unitarian Sunday School Society"?

It is the Society which ministers to the needs of the Sunday-schools of our Fellowship, by printing manuals, services, and a fortnightly paper.

9. What is the "National Alliance of Unitarian Women"?

It is the organization of the Women of our Fellowship. It works in many ways to quicken the life of the churches. Each church that will has its local branch.

10. What is the "Young People's Religious Union"?

It is the organization of the Young People of our Fellowship. "Truth, Worship, Service," is its motto. Each church that will has its branch.

11. What is our "National Conference"?

It is an advisory Conference, in which delegates from our churches take counsel together to promote life and co-operation in our Unitarian Fellowship. It was formed in 1865 and meets once in two years.

12. What are our "State" and "Local Conferences"?

Smaller associations of the churches for purposes of conference and missionary effort.

13. What is the "Post-office Mission"?

It is preaching by mail to isolated inquirers, who ask concerning the Unitarian Faith. Any church that will takes part in the work, answering the letters and sending the tracts.

14. What Other Denominational Activities are there?

Benevolent Societies of many kinds, Ministerial Unions, Laymen's Clubs, Academies for the young, Theological Schools.

15. Where do our National Societies have their Home?

In Boston, Mass., at 25 Beacon Street, close by the State House. It is a beautiful stone building, presented to the American Unitarian Association by the laymen of Boston. There are local offices in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco.

16. What is the "International Council"?

A Council of Liberal Religious thinkers and workers of many lands,—the United States, Great Britain, France, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Hungary, and the East,—fifteen nationalities, twenty-four religious fellowships. It was organized in Boston, in 1900, and meets once in two years. It met in London in 1901; in Amsterdam, 1903; in Geneva, 1905; in Boston, 1907.

17. What Unitarian Papers are there?

The "Christian Register" published in Boston since 1821 is the weekly paper. The "Unitarian" in New York, and the "Pacific Unitarian" in San Francisco, are monthlies, and there are many local and parish papers. Every Unitarian family that can afford to should take one of these papers, for the home's own sake and for the sake of the Unitarian cause.

18. How many Unitarian Churches are there?

About one thousand in all that bear the name,—four hundred and fifty or more in the United States, four hundred in the British Empire, a hundred and twenty-five in Transylvania. This last group dates from the Reformation time; the English group from about 1700; the American from about 1800. Most

of our own group are in New England, many of them being the original "First" churches of the Puritan Forefathers.

19. Are there Unitarians outside of Unitarian Churches?

Many. Several religious bodies, Unitarian in thought and in spirit, do not carry the name. There is no reason why they should, having grown on a different historic root. Our Universalist neighbors, the Hicksite Friends, the Liberal Protestants in Holland, France, and Switzerland, the Protestanten Verein of Germany, the Reformed Jews, the Brahmo Somaj of India, and in these latter days very many in the Liberal Orthodox churches, as well as many thinkers outside of all churches, are in close sympathy with us.

20. Does the Unitarian Denomination grow rapidly in numbers?

No; and it is hard to see how it can, if thoroughly true to its principles, for Freedom of Reason and Conscience tends to keep one in the thin front line of thought. Let us not regret that Unitarianism is less a loaf than a leaven. As leaven, it has helped not a little this last hundred years to lighten and sweeten the whole big loaf. It is not an establishment: it is a movement, and part of a movement vastly larger than itself. Its concern should be, not numbers, but to interpret rightly that movement, and to be actively true to its function of spiritual influence. Each individual Unitarian in his place of life is responsible for a share of that influence.

21. Have there been any Unitarians of Distinction?

Because of that New England and Puritan blood in many of our churches, not a few of the shining figures in American literature, education, philanthropy, and reform, were born in our faith; while others have come to share it. Its four master-teachers in the last century were men of the highest distinction in things of the spirit,—William Ellery Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Theodore Parker in our own country, and James Martineau of England.

22. Where can one who wishes to know more about Unitarianism as a Faith and a Movement easily find what he wants?

In a short statement called "The Unitarian Church its History and Characteristics," by Joseph Henry Crooker, which the American Unitarian Association (25 Beacon Street, Boston) sends free on rèquest. It also prints many other like statements for free distribution.

23. Why should we seek to plant more Churches to spread the Unitarian Gospel?

In order to open more centres of spiritual influence;

To make souls know themselves as children of God;

To help make truth and righteousness the foundation of the nations;

To do our part in establishing the Kingdom of God on the earth.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2.00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

[No. 225]

THE HIGHEST CRITICISM

BY REV. WILLIAM H. LYON, D.D.

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
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THE HIGHEST CRITICISM.

"Did not our heart burn within us as he opened to us the Scriptures?"—LUKE xxv. 32.

A QUARTER of a century has passed since the Revised Version of the New Testament was issued. The curiosity of the public was intense. Millions of copies were sold, and an American newspaper had the whole translation telegraphed by cable and issued it as an extra. Probably since the earlier years of the Reformation there have not been so many readers of the Bible as there were in 1881.

But, if good people expected as a result of this eager study a marked increase in piety or righteousness, they soon found themselves mistaken. When the public understood that there was no very important change made from the old version, that no great damage and no great good was to be done to the popular theology, they left their Bibles to gather dust again, or to repose, elegantly bound, upon the centre-table in their parlors. Possibly there was a little less superstition about the Scriptures among those to whom the translation was the Bible, and who found that it was not quite perfect; and perhaps some scholarly people discovered that their fresh reading raised some questions that had gone to sleep with the book itself, and began to follow these questions out to their answers. Here and there the translation of certain texts gave a new and higher meaning to them than

the old version had given, and led to new sermons upon them. But, on the whole, the attention roused by the new translation soon slept again. There were too many sensations then, as there are now, to give mere literary curiosity any long life, and some new cause of excitement soon replaced this in the common mind.

In the last few years the Bible has again attracted the attention of the reading world. A striking and somewhat pretentious phrase, "The Higher Criticism," has caught its eye, and fixed it once more upon the ancient book. The word *Criticism* seemed to the general mind a word of hostility, of attack, and that human impulse which makes the multitude run wherever there is news of a fight drove them to the books and the reviews, the lectures and the sermons, that promised to tell them what was going on in the theological arena. It has been hard to explain to them that criticism is a neutral word, that it means simply impartial judgment, like that of scales and yard-sticks, that its object is simply to find out the facts and to brush away ancient and modern prejudice. The popular speech uses the word *criticise* in the sense of to *condemn*, and what was expected by many readers was to see the Bible disproved and discredited, its pretensions unveiled, and its tyranny over human nature forever thrown off. The popular sympathy is generally very largely on the side of the heretics. It has an uneasy suspicion that the theologians and the ministers are taking advantage of its ignorance, and it is apt to welcome any bold come-outer that promises to let them in behind the scenes.

The first of the higher critics were heretics, and they were roundly rebuked by the regulars. But

to-day they are the regulars themselves. Things that even Theodore Parker would not have said are written freely and frankly by those who once raged against him. It is not from Harvard Divinity School alone that the new knowledge of the circumstances under which the Bible was written is proclaimed, but also from Yale and Oxford. The leading expounders of the latest view of the Scriptures are Congregationalists and Episcopalians, and those of us who are fortunate enough to have the modifying and refining influence of members of those orthodox bodies among our hearers may be pardoned a little amusement when we find them disturbed by novel views which their own leaders have taught us. In fact, places have sometimes changed, and there are so-called Liberals who are shocked and antagonized by the rash extremes to which some so-called Conservatives are rushing. How the latter can reconcile their views with the statements of faith which they are supposed to endorse is a mystery to those who look on from the outside, but, on the other hand, no one can fail to respect the courage and frankness with which they have taken up the truth. It certainly is better, since these things must be said, that they should be said by men of reverence and restraint, not only by sensational writers and by lecturers whose chief aim is to amuse the mob.

Now one consequence of all this agitation is to revive again the interest in the Bible. Like the announcement of the revision, the rumor of the rearrangement of the Bible has called back the wandering mind of the public to that neglected book. It is a deeper and a healthier attention, and it will last longer. For what attracts it is not a finished fact,

like the revision, to be judged all at once, but a process that began many years ago and will last many years yet. And it will grow in interest as it goes on, since it will come to questions of greater importance than any it has already settled. It will hold the respect of thoughtful people, too, because what it has done already has been so universally accepted by scholars of all communions. The rearrangement of the Old Testament is regarded by practically all learned men in that line of study as forever settled, whatever ministers, for whatever reason, may continue to say to their hearers. So, while good men shrink a little, as at the thought of a necessary operation upon some loved member of their family, before the fearless yet reverent advance of the new learning upon the New Testament, the common feeling is that which ought to be held toward surgeons who have proved their skill and trustworthiness in previous operations. The truth is hard to hear, sometimes, but it is the only thing that in the long run it pays to hear.

But this interest, like the other, will die out at last, with very much the same results. It is a literary curiosity, not religious, and will soon be satisfied, or find some new subject to run after. As before, the superstitious use of the Bible will receive a shock, and will change in many cases to unbelief and neglect. In general, the unintelligent and undiscriminating reader, who has been accustomed to think that the Scriptures need no understanding in the reading, that one chapter is as good as another so long as it is in the Bible, will find his interest much less. It is possible, too, that some really pious people, who have rested their faith in the great religious verities upon the infallible text of

the sacred book, will be greatly disturbed and even unsettled by finding that all is not as they thought it was.

It is the last class alone that needs to be considered, the truly earnest and religious, and to them it should be said that there is a kind of criticism of the Bible that is much higher than either the translation or the sifting of the various books. There is a point of view from which the question of who wrote its books or when they were written vanishes entirely. The value of any passage for its best purpose never depended upon these things, and is not affected by the opinion of learned men upon them. Religion is not a matter of time or place. The question of right and wrong is not to be settled by mere scholars. The Bible is a record of spiritual experience, and, if the experience is real, it speaks to the soul that is ready for it, no matter how many centuries or thousands of miles lie between. There is a higher criticism than that which is so called. Let us name it the Highest Criticism, and let us note that it has always been in the world, is not in the least injured by anything that scholars have done, and may be exercised by any one who has a soul, whatever learning he has or has not.

The Highest Criticism, what is it? It is the recognition of life by life. It is the answer of soul to soul. It is the echo of experience in experience. Take the Twenty-third Psalm, for instance. We are told now that David did not write it. At first this seems to take the value out of it. We had always thought of David, the shepherd lad, writing among his sheep, in the green pastures and by the still waters, with his rod and his staff by his side, or as leading his flock through some dark ravine that seemed like the valley of the

shadow of death. To be told that the psalm is later than he lived, and that it was composed by some unknown singer, seems to drain the sweetness from it. The case is not helped by looking up David's record, and finding that he was really not a very spiritually-minded man, and that, perhaps, it is just as well that he did not write the beloved psalm. It remains anonymous. It has no historical or personal association. It floats down the centuries like a sweet odor from an unseen flower or a strain of music from an instrument invisible and unknown.

But is the odor any less sweet or the music any less refreshing because we do not know whence it comes? Or would it be any sweeter if we could find the flower or trace the notes back to the instrument? We should have an addition to our stock of knowledge. Our curiosity would be satisfied. Our inborn and inextinguishable desire for facts would be pleased. But this is a different part of our nature, and perhaps a lower one than the love of odors and of music. Less valuable, too, for we should be poorer to find the instrument and never hear the music than to hear the music and never know whence it came.

So there is a power in us to appreciate spiritual beauty or moral truth which is quite distinct from either the love of persons or the ability to reason. It is the power of experience, or of the refinement which experience has produced, to recognize that which is like itself or that which it needs to make it better. I knew a most loving couple who had come to that supreme moment when death was gliding between them. The husband's life was ebbing out fast, and there were but a few moments of communion left to them. The temporal affairs were settled, and then husband and

wife joined hands and repeated this Twenty-third Psalm. It was very soothing and consoling, the wife told me; but why was it so? Was it because David wrote it? Would it have been any less so if some one had stepped in to say that he had found that nobody knew who wrote it? As well might one say that the sweetness of the rose depended upon its name, or the beauty of a symphony upon our knowing who composed it. These would be interesting facts, but they lie upon an entirely different and lower level than that of the appreciation of the thing itself. The sweetness of the rose depends upon its power to be sweet and upon the power of the passer-by to perceive it. The beauty of the symphony depends upon the music in the soul of the composer and the music in the soul of the hearer. It would be interesting to know the biography of the composer and the history of the writing of the symphony. It would be very satisfying to be able to analyze the whole production, to watch the working out of the themes, and to learn the general theory of symphonic composition. But a man might know all these pleasant things and yet never enter into the spirit of the music. The programme tells many good people all about the symphony, and we see some of them reading the programme instead of listening to the music. This higher criticism is very interesting to them, and, if one may judge by the expression or lack of expression on their faces, that is as far as they can go. The music in them does not rise to greet the music that comes to them. The higher criticism they have. The highest criticism they have not, and they cannot have it till their musical appreciation has risen nearer to the level of the composer.

To many a husband and wife it may well be im-

possible for the spiritual experience of that unknown poet who wrote the Twenty-third Psalm to appeal. They have no experience of their own, no such ability of soul to answer to soul as gave the real consolation of that solemn time. They might repeat the lines as a sort of sacrament, incantation, mysterious charm against the power of death,—a not uncommon way of repeating Scripture,—but of real comfort, of stay to a sinking heart, of antidote to the dread of the unknown, there could be none. That Highest Criticism which is the power to appreciate and answer to spiritual beauty and power would not be in them.

Or let us move on to the New Testament. The Higher Criticism is at work here, and the results are likely to be very startling. It is unpleasant to be assured that Matthew did not write the First Gospel nor John the Fourth. It is disturbing to have some of the main facts in the story of Jesus brought into doubt. The historic foundations of Christianity are likely to be seriously shaken. Those who have built their faith upon events and persons may be troubled by the results of what is called the Higher Criticism.

But not those who are capable of that Highest Criticism which is the answer of spiritual experience to the spiritual appeal of Jesus. He says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Now there are thousands of persons who believe that Jesus said these words, but do not believe in the words. Faith in Christ is very easy so long as it means believing about him, but when it comes to believing in him as we do in a wise friend, or a friend in whose character we have confidence, they are not to be found. They do

not love their enemies, and they by no means pray for those that use them badly. There are multitudes of this kind of Christians, whose souls do not answer to the appeal of the Christian life. The biography of Christ they believe in with their minds, and this belief gives them a sense of security here and for the hereafter. But the life of Christ which alone gives the biography of Christ any value does not come home to them as a reality.

Such people are likely to be seriously disturbed by the results of the Higher Criticism, because its field of work is exactly their field of belief. But the man who believes in the life of Christ as a spiritual condition, and not merely as a series of events, will not be troubled by scholarly investigations. There is that in his heart that answers to the teachings of his Master and to that illustration of them which he gave on the cross. His is the power of the Highest Criticism, which deals not with the things of time, but with the things of eternity. It may or may not be possible for him to carry out the Christian ideal among the circumstances and practices of to-day, but he realizes that it is the ideal toward which human life must climb, and he recognizes his Master in the beauty and the power of whoever lifted it before him. The claim of Jesus to the loyalty of the world will lie less and less in his miracles as the world grows more and more able to appreciate him, and to those who can appreciate him the authorship of the Gospels will be no more essential than that of "Hamlet."

Let us take two illustrations more of this Highest Criticism. Toward the end of the Book of Deuteronomy is a chapter that contains what is styled the Blessing of Moses. He calls the twelve tribes of Israel

before him one by one, and gives them his benediction. It is a chapter which is very interesting to the archæologist. The higher critic reads it eagerly for its information on the history of Israel. But to the ordinary reader it is very uninteresting. The tribes of Israel are gone, and some of their history can well be spared. The Thummin and Urim of Levi and the leap of Dan from Bashan do not seem to concern us. But suddenly the reader comes upon a sentence that makes his heart leap,—"The eternal God is thy dwelling-place, and underneath are the everlasting arms." That sentence is like a chink through time into eternity, through human history into the divine love and peace. The wise reader takes it away from its dull context. He does not care whether Moses said it or not. He leaves the scholars to settle the question. But that thought of God as our home and our hiding-place in time of trouble belongs to him. He sets it in his funeral service, and keeps it for all the other hard and trying times of his life.

Here is an instance of the use of the Bible which the Higher Criticism cannot affect. It illustrates the use which the Bible will more and more serve as men grow more spiritual. We have this treasure in earthen vessels, and it will stay with us when the vessels in which it was saved for us have been broken and thrown away. In older days, readers hung with wonder upon stories of miracle, or traced the story of their favorite heroes through strange adventures. So the child still does. Every Sunday-school teacher knows how much easier it is to interest his class in the Old Testament than in the New, in story than in precept. But, when men and women come to know life, when their spiritual needs develop and their spiritual senses have been

sharpened by the ripening of the soul, it is the springs of life by which they stop and drink.

Here are the Epistles to the Corinthians. How much in them is of time, belongs to conditions that are past! What have we to do with meats offered to idols, with discerning of spirits and interpretation of tongues? But suddenly, as when a stony road becomes soft and smooth, and winds among trees and meadows, we find ourselves reading, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." The great councils that formulated the creeds did not care for this, nor did our fathers when they were busy quarrying out doctrines from the Book which was to them all alike divine. There is nothing here that gives the higher critic a clew to author or date, to age or circumstances. This is the spiritual life that knows no time or surrounding, but is eternal in its truth. It requires no proof, no "evidences of Christianity." It is of God and for man.

The Higher Criticism, then, deals with persons and dates,—the mere instruments and shells of the divine revelation. The Highest Criticism deals with the revelation itself, the divine truth and life that shine through times and circumstances, and that lie, in books as in the world, among dull details and unessential conditions, as the diamond lies in the clay. The real question is not Who wrote it? but What does it say to me? In that beautiful story of the walk to Emmaus the disciples reproached themselves with having failed to notice, not whether the stranger who had spoken to them was a man in authority, but that their heart burned within them as he talked with them by the way and opened to them the Scriptures.

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THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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[No. 226]

THE HISTORY OF UNITARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN CHURCHES

CHARLESTON, NEW ORLEANS LOUISVILLE, RICHMOND

BY

REV. ARTHUR A. BROOKS

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

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Our Declaration.

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE HISTORY OF UNITARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN CHURCHES: CHARLESTON, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISVILLE, RICHMOND.

Charleston.

The Unitarian church in Charleston, S.C., while dating as a separate organization from the year 1817, took its root much further back than that, in the liberal nature of the people of the Independent Presbyterian or Congregational Church, which had existed for more than a century. In this church the ministers were chosen indiscriminately from Congregational and Presbyterian sources. We may judge of the liberal attitude of this church by its official action from time to time. As an example, take the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted in 1775: "This church has never in formal manner adopted any name, platform, or constitution, but suffered itself to be called Congregational, Presbyterian, or Independent,—sometimes by one of these names, sometimes by two of them, sometimes by all three." "The main thing this church has had in view since 1732 was not so much to define exactly the mode of their discipline . . . as to be upon a *broad dissenting bottom*, and leave themselves as free as possible from all foreign shackles, that no moderate person of either denomination might be afraid to join them. The constitution of this church is to have no absolute invariable form, but to act upon the freest and most liberal principles."

In such an atmosphere of liberal polity and principle this church grew and prospered till in 1772 it was decided to erect a second building to accommodate its many worshippers. With the Revolution, however, came troublous times, so that the second edifice was not completed till 1787; but after the restoration of peace this double church worshipped in its two buildings under colleague pastors for many years.

In 1815 the death of Rev. William Hollinshead, after a ministry of a quarter of a century, brought on events which led to a formal division of the double church. Rev. Anthony Forster was chosen to succeed him as co-pastor with Rev. B. M. Palmer. For a year previous he had served as temporary supply during Dr. Hollinshead's illness and absence; and during that year a spiritual experience had come to him such as has happened to many another seeker after doctrinal truth,—an experience which led him, when it became necessary for him formally to be inducted into office and to subscribe to the Westminster Confession, to hesitate and finally to refuse. Mr. Forster had married a daughter of Mr. Joseph Gales, of Raleigh, N.C., and Mrs. Gales was daughter of Dr. Priestley, the English Unitarian and scientific scholar. Mr. Forster felt it incumbent upon him to rescue his father-in-law, Mr. Gales, for whom he had the highest personal esteem, from what he regarded as dangerous heresy. He therefore began to read Unitarian books, especially those of Dr. Priestley, with the result that misgivings about Calvinism rose in his mind, and that the candor and single-hearted love of truth exhibited by these Unitarian writers finally so prevailed upon him that the would-be converter

was himself converted. He declined thereupon to accept a pastorate that did not rest simply on the principles of the Gospels. This decision brought on a crisis in the affairs of the church, for it became evident that either he or the rule of subscription to the Westminster Confession must go. In the meantime, during the period of his gradually changing views, Mr. Forster had carefully avoided all controversial themes, and, confining himself to ethical and spiritual teaching, had effectively established himself in the approval and love of a large part of his congregation. After much discussion and various propositions for settling the difficulty, the result was a final separation of the Calvinistic from the liberal element among the people, the latter, numbering seventy-five subscribers, taking the church building in Archdale Street, relinquishing their share in the funds of the original corporation, and assuming $10,000 of the church debt. Their charter, issued Dec. 13, 1817, to continue in force twenty-one years, describes them as "the Second Independent or Congregational Church of Charleston." Not yet were they ready to take the name "Unitarian."

The theological change thus brought about was not wholly the result of local causes, but partly a manifestation of the spirit of the time. In the quickened intellectual atmosphere following the Revolution, the whole Congregational Church of America found itself developing and gradually dividing into the Orthodox and the Unitarians.

Mr. Forster's health shortly failed, and he was obliged to close his pastorate in 1819. The society sought a new minister, and found him, at the recommendation of President Kirkland of Harvard Uni-

versity, in Rev. Samuel Gilman, then a tutor at his Alma Mater. With his wife, who was Miss Caroline Howard, of Boston, and who had already won some literary reputation, he took up his residence in Charleston in the autumn of 1819, and was ordained to the ministry on December 1 by Rev. Joseph Tuckerman, afterward distinguished for his ministry to the poor in Boston, Rev. Jared Sparks, the noted biographer, afterward President of Harvard University, and Rev. Mr. Parks, a neighboring Presbyterian minister.

Mr. Gilman had a long and prosperous pastorate of nearly forty years. At first there were naturally enough some defections of individuals who either had felt a special personal regard for Mr. Forster or were dissatisfied with the views of his successor or could not endure the odium of a new and unpopular name; but after a time Mr. Gilman's character and culture made his influence felt, and he took and held an honored place among the clergy, while his church on account of the wealth and intelligence of its members held an influential position in the community. During his ministry the church debt was paid off, partly by subscriptions, partly by the sale of land, and partly by a legacy from Colonel Thomas Roper, a distinguished and public-spirited Unitarian, who also left to the city the Roper Fund. In 1839 the original charter, which had been issued in 1817, constituting Daniel C. Webb, Hugh Patterson, and others a body corporate under the name of the Second Independent or Congregational Church in Charleston having expired, the church was rechartered as "The Unitarian Church in Charleston."

In 1818 a set of rules for members was adopted, of which the first two were these:—

"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we, the communing members of the Second Independent or Congregational Church in Charleston, solemnly asserting for ourselves and as fully allowing to all others the right of private judgment and freedom of opinion in all things pertaining to the conscience, do, with a view of securing the regular and orderly administration of our ecclesiastical affairs, agree to the following rules and regulations:—

"Article First. We receive the written word of God, contained in the scripture of the Old and New Testaments, as our only rule of faith and practice.

"Article Second. We admit to a participation of our common privileges all who acknowledge the divine authority of the religion of Jesus Christ as preserved in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, and whose lives exhibit evidence of their sincerity and uprightness."

In 1820 an association was formed called "The Charleston Unitarian Book and Tract Society," with the following names as managers: Hugh Patterson, President; Samuel Gilman, Secretary; Thomas Lee, Daniel Perkins, James Smith, Daniel Stevens, Daniel C. Webb, Joshua B. Whitridge, Jeremiah A. Yates. This is the oldest organization among Unitarian churches to engage in Post-office Mission work.

In 1853 Dr. Gilman's health being broken, he was relieved by an assistant pastor, Rev. C. M. Taggart, who after a brilliant but brief ministry died in 1854. During the two years from April, 1852, to April, 1854, the church edifice was entirely and beautifully remodelled at an expense of $35,000, largely defrayed by the generous premiums paid at the sale of the pews. Dr. Gilman died in 1858, and after his death the min-

istry of the church was somewhat broken, the pulpit being occupied by Rev. James McFarland, Rev. George G. Ingersoll, and probably others. Details of these years are lacking, inasmuch as at the outbreak of the Civil War the records, library, organ, communion service, and church furnishings were removed to Columbia for safety, and were afterward all burned with that city. During the greater part of the dark period of the war the church was closed and services discontinued.

In April, 1865, the church itself having been but little injured and the congregation returning to the city, steps were taken to resume services, and Rev. Calvin Stebbins from the Harvard Divinity School was selected as minister. Such was the disturbed condition of affairs, however, that it was agreed that a little time must be allowed for sectional differences to subside, and Mr. Stebbins withdrew.

Through the aid of John Gibbon, Esq., a member of the congregation then residing in Paris, and of Rev. James Martineau, an Englishman was then secured for the pulpit,—Rev. Thomas Hirst Smith. Settled in November, 1866, and remaining till February, 1868, Mr. Smith did a valuable work. He was succeeded in December, 1868, by Rev. Rufus P. Cutler, of Brooklyn, N.Y., who served with acceptance for six years, till, his health failing, he was obliged to withdraw. Rev. James Boyd, an Englishman, served as minister for a year, and Rev. Henry F. Jenks, of Boston, for two years, from 1873 to 1875.

In January, 1876, Rev. E. C. L. Browne became pastor, and remained thirteen years. During this period the church suffered from the loss by death of many of its oldest and most influential members.

In August, 1885, a destructive cyclone greatly damaged the edifice, but a still greater calamity befell in the earthquake of the following year, when the beautiful structure was almost totally wrecked. A generous outpouring of money, however, from the entire body of Unitarian churches enabled the society to restore their edifice after the original design, and to render it perhaps more beautiful than ever.

In October, 1889, Rev. H. A. Whitman became pastor. In 1893 a parish house was erected near the church at a cost of about $10,000, the gift of Mr. Alva Gage, who also upon his decease left a considerable fund for the endowment of the society. Mr. Whitman was succeeded in 1901 by the present minister, Rev. C. M. Gray.

Many of the honored names of Charleston have had place as members of the Unitarian church; but unfortunately complete lists cannot be given, as the records previous to the war are all lost. At the meetings of the corporation in 1865-66 the following names appear:—

Dr. James Moultrie.
Joseph Walker.
C. W. Logan.
N. M. Porter.
Thaddeus Street.
H. S. Griggs.
S. W. Fisher.
S. S. Mills.
W. L. Webb.
James M. Bee.
Dr. S. Logan.
J. H. Colburn.
C. M. Innes.
John Webb.
G. E. Gibbon.
Dr. A. G. Mackey.
Z. B. Oakes.
Wilson Glover.
O. Wilkie.
J. W. Gray.
James Chapman.
Robert Chapman.
A. G. Rose.
Dr. A. B. Rose.
Henry S. Tew.
J. R. Wiltberger.
William McComb.
A. F. Black.
D. Barrow.
G. A. Locke.

F. L. Porcher.
L. M. Jones.
A. H. Jones.
W. H. Jones.
W. E. Howland.
B. M. Strobel.
M. D. Strobel.
T. A. P. Horton.
G. D. Connor.
William Shepherd.
J. W. Harrisson.
T. D. Eason.
J. M. Eason.
Charles H. West.
William Thompson.
Charles Love.
H. H. Williams.

On the walls of the church and in the cemetery are tablets and monuments in memory of the following:—

1777. Rev. William Tennent, A.M.
1824. Mrs. Martha Savage.
1818. Miss Elizabeth Savage.
1855. Miss Sarah Savage.
1828–1831. Samuel and Hannah Smith.
1820. Rev. Anthony Forster.
1858. Rev. Samuel Gilman, D.D.
1854. Rev. Charles Manson Taggart.
1859. Rev. James R. McFarland.
1813. Rev. Isaac Stockton Keith.
1893. Rev. E. C. L. Browne.

New Orleans.

The Unitarian church in New Orleans, La., dates back to about the year 1817, although it was not then known as a Unitarian church. It was the second Protestant church to be established in the city, and its edifice was first opened for public worship July 4, 1819. It was originally of the Presbyterian denomination, and its minister was Rev. Sylvester Larned, who after a short and brilliant pastorate died, a victim of yellow fever, in 1820 at the early age of twenty-three.

His successor was Rev. Theodore Clapp, a young

clergyman from Massachusetts, who had studied at Yale and Andover, and who preached his first sermon on the last Sunday in February, 1822. For nearly thirty-five years he continued his ministry there, and surrendered his charge only when compelled by failing health. Mr. Clapp was a man of great vigor; and in the pulpit and out of it, in winter and in summer, his labors were untiring. Every few years during his long ministry the city was visited by epidemics of yellow fever, and twice at least was smitten by cholera of a virulent kind. In the midst of sickness and death and the poverty which ensued always was to be seen the familiar form of "Parson" Clapp, ministering both to the bodily and to the spiritual needs of all within his reach, whether they were of his own parish or not. Being a man of sympathetic nature, he was often led, in spite of his physical strength, to overtask himself in these charitable labors. Notwithstanding this he succeeded in doing such good work in the pulpit that he earned for himself the reputation of one of the greatest preachers of the day. It is remarkable, too, that in the midst of all his labors he found time to formulate a new belief quite different from that in which he had been brought up. At length abandoning the Presbyterian form of faith and proclaiming his new convictions, he drew along with him most of his congregation, so that the church edifice was retained and became known as the First Congregational Church. The charter of this church is dated 1833.

This new doctrinal position Mr. Clapp arrived at not by the study of books nor by intercourse with liberal thinkers in the North, but solely through his close study of the life of Jesus Christ as told in the

New Testament and through his philanthropic labors among the poor and suffering in his own city. On the first Sunday of July, 1834, he tells us in his autobiography, he proclaimed from the pulpit for the first time his firm conviction that the Bible does not teach the doctrine of eternal punishment, and announced that he could no longer teach the tenets of the Presbyterian Church nor conform to its polity. This, he says, was the happiest day he had ever experienced, since now he was in a position to vindicate the ways of God to man. "It was in the Crescent City," he writes further, "not in my native place, not in New Haven, Boston, or Andover, but in New Orleans, where I learned to take shelter from all the ills with which earth can assail us under the brooding wings of Ineffable Goodness."

Personally, Mr. Clapp was a man of large stature and imposing presence, and outside the pulpit of a genial manner that won the hearts of all. In the pulpit he spoke with a spiritual fervor and impressiveness that carried conviction to all who heard him. His church was almost always crowded with an attentive congregation. Although after his announcement of a change of belief he was obliged to carry on a controversial warfare with those from whom he differed, he was able to retain the esteem of many, if not all of them; for he was genuinely liberal, maintaining at the same time the right of individual freedom in matters of faith and conscience and inculcating and exemplifying a spirit of tolerance for all.

At the time Mr. Clapp was chosen pastor the indebtedness of the society amounted to $45,000, and he was unwilling to assume the pastorate unless pro-

vision should be made for the entire liquidation of this debt. More than half of it was immediately raised by a lottery scheme, then considered a proper means for raising money for charitable purposes; while the remainder was provided for by the generosity of Judah Touro, Esq., a philanthropic merchant of New Orleans. He purchased the church building, then standing on the corner of St. Charles and Gravier Streets, and continued to hold it and keep it in repair without conditions for the benefit of the society from that time till it was destroyed by fire in 1851. With the burden of debt removed and under the preaching of an eloquent minister this church prospered and became one of the most influential Protestant churches in the city. It was the church that chiefly attracted the attention of strangers, —a matter of no small moment in a city of which nearly one-half the people in those days were what might be called a floating population.

In the midst of such a ministry the people were overtaken by material disaster in the loss by fire of their church building. It was some time before a new one could be erected; and as the chapel in which services were temporarily conducted was much too small for the congregation, many of the people wandered off to other places of worship or ceased to attend any. Soon after the new church was finished, Mr. Clapp's health began to fail, and he was compelled to resign his charge and remove from the city.

This new edifice stood on St. Charles Street, near Julia, and was named "Church of the Messiah." Then it was that the name "Unitarian" was first adopted by the congregation, although for many years, as we have seen, Mr. Clapp had been preaching Unitarian

doctrines, and the real change from Presbyterianism to Liberalism on the part of minister and people had been wrought long before.

After Mr. Clapp left, Rev. E. C. Bolles, a young Universalist minister of great promise, was settled as pastor, and remained for several years. He was succeeded by Mr. Thomas; but, when war between the States grew imminent, he resigned his charge and withdrew. The pulpit then became vacant, and so remained till the war was over, although services were not entirely discontinued, but were maintained by lay members of the congregation. One who frequently officiated was Dr. Clapp, a physician in the city, son of Rev. Theodore Clapp.

When peace was restored between the North and the South, Dr. William G. Eliot, of St. Louis, came to the assistance of the church. Under his administration a revival of interest took place, and high hopes for the future began to be entertained. His son, Rev. Thomas L. Eliot, took charge; but his health prevented continued residence in the city, and soon the pulpit was vacant again. After this ensued a succession of short pastorates; and under the discouraging influence of frequent changes the number of worshippers began to diminish and the church to decline in strength. Revenues grew smaller, and a debt accumulated. At this juncture Rev. Charles A. Allen took charge, and by his energy and the help of the American Unitarian Association the church was saved, and confidence and hope again renewed. For seven years Mr. Allen remained and did efficient work, but at length was obliged to leave and reside elsewhere to the regret of the people. For several years after this there was no settled minister. The

recent pastorates have been that of Rev. Walter C. Peirce, who was settled in 1893, that of Rev. Henry W. Foote, who followed Mr. Peirce in 1902, and that of the present minister, Rev. Harry E. Gilchrist, settled in 1906. During these years the church has become more firmly established, and is now in better condition than at any time since the war. In 1902 it dedicated its present building on the corner of Peters Avenue and South Rampart Street.

Louisville.

The establishment of the Unitarian church in Louisville, Ky., according to the Year Book of the American Unitarian Association, dates from the year 1830.

The first pastor of that church was Rev. George Chapman, of Boston, who came to Louisville in 1832 at the solicitation of a few earnest and liberal-minded people to whom the principles of Unitarianism had long been dear. These persons consisted not only of New Englanders, but of others from England, Scotland, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Indiana, and other States of the Union. They had occasionally held services in various private houses and in the school-house of Mr. Francis E. Goddard, —services which had been conducted for the most part by distinguished visiting clergymen, men like Charles Briggs, John Pierpont, Bernard Whitman, and Horace Holley. Such was the impression made by these preachers that the people had erected a church building, which was dedicated May 27, 1832, by Rev. Francis Parkman, of Boston, and Rev. James Walker, of Charlestown, Mass., afterward president of Harvard University. It is worthy of remark that so devoted to the cause of the liberal faith were these

few people that they completed this their house of worship and paid for it in full even before they had a settled minister. "They loved Unitarianism," a later pastor has said of them, "and they loved it for its cheering views of God and man, of Jesus and his religion, of life and death, of duty and immortality, for its liberal, rational, and at the same time reverent interpretation of the Bible: they loved it for its wide charity and generous fellowship, not exclusive, but inclusive, conditioned not on dogmas or form, but on earnestness of purpose and hearty yearning for moral and spiritual aid."

Mr. Chapman preached his first sermon June 24, 1832. A ministry was thus begun which promised to be full of intellectual and spiritual power; but it was destined to be of short duration, for failing health compelled Mr. Chapman to resign his charge at the end of a year.

He was succeeded by Rev. James Freeman Clarke, who became pastor in the autumn of 1833, and remained seven years. Mr. Clarke was fresh from the Divinity School in Cambridge, having preached but one sermon before setting out for Louisville. At the very beginning of his ministry, he writes in his autobiography, he was confronted by the question whether he should preach Unitarianism as doctrine or as practical Christianity. He decided to lay the main stress of his work on positive Christianity, believing it should be the first object of every preacher to make God seem near to men, to bring consolation to the sorrowful, to dwell on the comfort of God's love, to enforce the duties of life,—in a word, to preach the mastership and leadership of Jesus Christ. It is not strange, therefore, to find in the covenant

which the church under Dr. Clarke adopted Dec. 29, 1833, such a statement as this:—

"We whose names are subscribed, being fully convinced that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God, the only appointed Mediator between God and Man, and being desirous of obeying his commands and forming the Christian character within us, do hereby covenant and engage," etc.

This idea of loyalty to Jesus Christ and of the formation of Christian character became the keynote of the subsequent preaching of Dr. Clarke, and his deep spiritual insight, his firmness of religious conviction, and his judicial mind, united with an unusual power of illuminating statement, made him a very real helper to his people. Nor was this all. To many who could not accept Orthodoxy, and who in some instances regarded themselves as infidels, his reverent and rational interpretation of the Bible was a revelation and a power. Outside the pulpit also Dr. Clarke did great service to the liberal cause in his conduct of and contributions to the *Western Messenger,* a magazine of a high order which interested a great number of earnest, progressive minds in his own city and elsewhere. Dr. Clarke was well received in Louisville, both by his own people and by the other churches of the city, especially the Episcopalians. Little by little his church grew and prospered, and he came to hold a place of influence in the community, not only through his religious, but also through his educational work. And yet he says of himself that he was not a popular preacher in that place and never should be; and, with this feeling upon him, he resigned his charge in June, 1840, and returned to Boston.

In August of that year he was succeeded by Rev. John H. Heywood, whose pastorate continued for forty years. During these years the church flourished and became one of the largest and most influential in the State. Mr. Heywood was not only active in his church duties, but, like his predecessor, was an indefatigable worker in the cause of public schools and in the charities of the city. Side by side with the Unitarian church in the early days there existed also a Universalist church,—another form of the same liberal tendency of thought which had come to manifest itself in that city. This church, though small, was fortunate in having for its ministers men of marked ability and courage, so that its growth was steady and healthy for some thirty years. Then for various reasons, removal, death, and the war, the congregations declined and services were suspended. Many of its best members united with the Unitarian society; and, when it was decided to erect a new edifice, the money derived from the sale of the Universalist property was added to the building fund of the Church of the Messiah. For with the addition of the Universalist element practically a new organization now took place, the name "Unitarian" being dropped and the present name, "Church of the Messiah," being adopted in its place. The new constitution of the society—which was substantially that of the Universalists, and superseded that of Dr. Clarke—contained the following liberal statement of faith and purpose:—

"We, the subscribers, feeling desirous to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, do hereby form ourselves into a society, that we may be helpers to each other, and that by

our united energies we may better serve the purposes of religion and of truth."

Prosperous also during these years was the missionary and benevolent work of the church. In 1841, under the leadership of Mr. A. G. Munn, a non-sectarian missionary Sunday-school was established, which attracted to itself a fine body of teachers and did a great amount of good. In 1858–59 an admirable "night school" was established in the hall of one of the fire-engine houses by some of the young men of the congregation: Messrs. Charles J. Kent, Augustus Holyoke, B. B. Huntoon, George Hood, H. P. Truman, and others. This school had a wide influence for good. At the same period there were being carried on two mission Sunday-schools, one by Mr. H. T. Wood, a devoted member of the church, and the other by Rev. D. A. Russell whom the church had engaged as minister-at-large. In 1865 an "Old Ladies' Home" was established, and successfully carried on by its friends till 1882, when it was merged in the well-endowed Cook Benevolent Institution, and its good work guaranteed permanence.

Mr. Heywood's long pastorate was followed by that of Rev. C. J. K. Jones, who, beginning his work in 1879, a little before Mr. Heywood formally closed his connection with the church, continued for nearly twenty years to be a vital and inspiring leader. One break there was in this pastorate, that of a year and a half from the summer of 1883 to the winter of 1884–85, during which Rev. John B. Green officiated as minister. After Mr. Jones's departure in 1898, two short pastorates followed—those of Revs. A. W. Littlefield and Fred. V. Hawley—till the present minister, Rev. William H. Ramsay, was settled in 1902.

The first church building was a small, tasteful edifice with sixty-four pews. In 1853 it was enlarged, and thirty-two pews added. This building stood on the south-west corner of Fifth and Walnut Streets, and was held by the society till 1870, when land was purchased at the corner of Fourth and York Streets, and a beautiful stone building erected thereon and dedicated Jan. 15, 1871. On the last day of the same year this fine structure was destroyed by fire. The congregation, however, immediately set to work to rebuild it, and, aided by generous contributions from many friends in the denomination, within a year successfully replaced their loss.

At the present time the society is in a most healthy condition, and the outlook for the liberal faith in Louisville is bright.

Richmond.

As long ago as 1833 there existed a Unitarian church in Richmond, Va., situated on Mayo Street, at that time a fashionable part of the city. The lot on which the church stood had been conveyed in 1831 to Jabez Parker, as agent for the congregation. In June, 1834, when the property had to be sold to pay off the church debt, it was bought in by some of the pew-holders, who themselves subscribed the necessary funds and took a deed of the property. In the following list of some of those who were members of this early church will be found names that were closely identified with the progress and good citizenship of Richmond's past:—

Isaac Davenport.
Mann S. Valentine.
Robert Poore.
John Enders.
Erastus Willey.
B. B. Haxall.

Thomas A. Rust.
Joseph Mayo.
John Goddin.
Isaac Goddin.
William Ritter.
Edmund Walls.
Jacob Mull.
Blair Bolling.
William B. Clarke.
Henry Clarke.
Jacob Shook.
George W. Clarke.
John Howard.
William M. Fordham.
Edward Anderson.
James J. Binford.
Isaac S. Cary.
John Early.
Martin Hollins.
Dr. Robert Briggs.
Samuel S. Saunders.
William G. Elam.
Edward Scott.
Edward Cox.
Edmund Steane.
James McKildoe.
William Sinton.
Richard O. Hawkins.
Giles Stewart.
James Lyle.
A. W. Nolting.
Martin Drewry.
Samuel Hawkins.
Samuel Cosby.
Dabney Garthright.
Wyndham Robertson.

The subscribers to the fund raised for buying in the church property received shares of stock in the church, which was now reorganized as the First Independent Christian Church of Richmond. Its original name had been the Unitarian-Universalist Church, as appears from an inscription still to be seen on the stone over the entrance of the building. The church has been subsequently referred to under the various names of "Unitarian," "Universalist," and "Universalist-Unitarian," as well as "Unitarian-Universalist." The building had been dedicated in January, 1833, and J. B. Pitkin had been ordained as minister at the same time. For nearly two years before this, however (*i.e.*, from April 21, 1831), he had preached for the society.

The earnestness and zeal of the members of this early church in the cause of liberal religion appear

in the following extract from an old, though undated, resolution:—

"*Resolved*, secondly, That we do most cordially approve the engagement of a pastor effected by our committee, and that we will use our utmost endeavors to ensure his continuance amongst us, believing that by his virtues, acquirements, and talents the cause of truth and liberal religious principles will be greatly promoted, and those of sectarianism discountenanced and exposed."

The records of this church from 1835 down to the time of the Civil War seem to have been lost, and its history during that period cannot be accurately detailed. The society must have maintained its existence, however, even though services were not regularly conducted. It was here that Rev. Edwin H. Chapin, the distinguished Universalist preacher, began his ministry. He came to Richmond in May, 1838, when but twenty-three years of age, and for two years and a half did most acceptable work till he was called to Charlestown, Mass., in 1840. Mr. Moncure D. Conway, in his Autobiography, mentions the fact that his cousin, John M. Daniel, preached there at some date prior to 1850, and that he himself also "gave in the long-silent Universalist church there two discourses on the Sunday of January 21, 1855." During the war the society was disbanded, though the property was held for many years afterward, till it was finally sold and the proceeds divided among individuals by decree of court in 1903.

Ten years before this, however, the church had waked from its long sleep when in December, 1893, Rev. George L. Chaney, then superintendent of the Southern Unitarian churches, began to hold services

in Belvedere Hall. Reorganization was effected on December 31 under the name of The First Unitarian Church of Richmond. The movement acquired a good start under Mr. Chaney's ministrations of a year and a half, and after his withdrawal continued a more or less prosperous existence during the several short pastorates of Rev. J. M. Seaton, Rev. M. K. Schermerhorn, and Rev. A. M. Somers till with the coming of Rev. J. L. Robinson, the present pastor, on Jan. 1, 1904, affairs began to take on new life and vigor. The church is now in a hopeful condition, and on Feb. 18, 1906, completed and dedicated an attractive edifice at the corner of Floyd Avenue and Harrison Street.

Such is the simple story of four of the oldest Unitarian churches of the South. Such were their ministers, and such were some of their prominent members. For three-quarters of a century Unitarian principles have existed in the South,—not simply as intellectual doctrines in the minds of isolated individuals, but as a vital religion embodied in such old churches as these, preached by their ministers and practised by their people. The record of these churches does not show an uninterrupted advance, but it does show persistency and unquenchable vitality. If they have slumbered, still they have not died. Through hardships and struggles, through isolation and persecution, through fire, cyclone, earthquake, through frequent changes of pastors and the ill-health of many of them, through the horrors of pestilence and of Civil War, through the poverty and the misunderstandings that followed in the wake of that war, these churches have still lived, and shown

such a power of renewal and such a persistency of faith as may well convince us that there is something more in this liberal religion than perhaps we have been aware of, and that it really lives by "the power of an endless life." In no section of our country probably have liberal churches been more hampered than here. Situated in a stronghold of Calvinism, few in number, limited in membership, isolated from one another, they have so overcome obstacles and so preserved the faith that in their renewed life of to-day they present us a result that is nothing less than wonderful.

It is an error to suppose that Unitarianism is an exotic in the South, an importation from New England, and that it can only flourish in the cold air of the North. The facts that have been related above do not justify this conclusion. The people of these churches were not mainly New Englanders. Their ministers did not all come from Boston, nor were they all reared under Unitarian influences. Clearly there was a spirit of liberality native in these places. Religion is not a matter of climate. Unitarianism is no more indigenous in New England than is any other form of thought. Long before New England was settled, Unitarianism existed in Hungary and Poland and elsewhere in Europe; and this is not strange, for it embodies the very essence of Protestantism, the very principles of Luther's Reformation, and carries them to their logical conclusion. Beyond all question the story of the early church in Charleston shows that, if this form of religion was in that place imported at all, it was imported not from New England, but from Old England. For it was not the works of Channing, but the works of Priestley, the English Unitarian, whose study influenced the mind of Anthony Forster,

and led him to change his belief. Still more conclusive perhaps is the story of Theodore Clapp in New Orleans. Cut off from Northern associations, too much absorbed in ministering to the needs temporal and spiritual of the people of his beloved city to know what distant scholars were thinking and saying, he yet arrived at these same liberal doctrines of God's love for all,—and arrived at them through this direct contact with the needy and suffering and the close study and direct application of the principles of the Gospels to the work he had in hand. Out of his daily ministering life grew his liberal ideas by a natural process: they were not even an importation from Old England. In how many other Southern lives, if we knew them, might we not find a similar story? The truth is, the times and the people were ready for this movement. Had it not been so, Unitarianism would not have come in the South, even in the measure that it did come. There was a spirit moving on the face of the waters. Among the thoughtful and the progressive in the South this influence was as real as in the North. The truth is, these churches were, in their inception and in their whole subsequent history, not pale reflections of the far-off light of Boston Unitarianism, but in themselves *sources* of light,—the light that lighteth everywhere candid, open-minded seekers after God's truth.

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2.00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

PIONEERS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA

Being the Great and Thursday Lectures Delivered in Boston in Nineteen Hundred and Three

Size, 5 1-2 x 8 inches; pages, 396; price, $1.50 *net;* postage, 13 cents.

THE purpose and scope of this volume cannot be better shown than by giving the subjects and authors of the thirteen chapters which make up its contents. These are: I. "William Brewster and the Independents," by Edwin D. Mead; II. "Roger Williams and the Doctrine of Soul Liberty," by W. H. P. Faunce; III. "Thomas Hooker and the Principle of Congregational Independency," by Williston Walker, IV "William Penn and the Gospel of th· Inner Light," by Benjamin B. Trueblood; V. "Thomas Jefferson and the Influence of Democracy on Religion," by Thomas R. Slicer; VI. "William Ellery Channing and the Growth of Spiritual Christianity," by William W. Fenn; VII. "Horace Bushnell and Progressive Orthodoxy," by Washington Gladden; VIII. "Hosea Ballou and the Larger Hope," by John Coleman Adams; IX. "Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Teaching of the Divine Immanence," by Francis G. Peabody; X. "Theodore Parker and the Naturalization of Religion," by James Eells; XI. "Phillips Brooks and the Unity of the Spirit," by Samuel A. Eliot.

The chapters making up this book were delivered as lectures in Boston in the spring of 1903, and attracted much attention. The purpose of the lectures and of the book is to set forth some of the great principles through which religious freedom in this country was achieved, and the connection with these principles of the great men who advocated them and gave them their power and enduring vitality. These thirteen champions of religious freedom were truly pioneers in the work in which they became so conspicuous, and no one can so fully realize the significance of our present freedom of thought in religious matters as by reading these accounts of the inception and growth of the religious principles which constitute so valued a part of our religious inheritance.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of .....dollars.

[No. 227]

WHAT IS IT TO BE A LIBERAL IN RELIGION?

BY

REV. CHARLES W. WENDTE

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

WHAT IS IT TO BE A LIBERAL IN RELIGION?

Matthew Arnold somewhere suggests that in the interests of clear and honest thinking we cease to employ all words which have been spoiled by long-continued theological misconception and misuse. Among these "spoiled" words, to many of us, is the term "liberal."

The prevailing idea of what it stands for is so sadly confused and misleading that at times one is tempted to abandon it altogether; and, in characterizing the new, progressive movement in religion, to employ some other term free from the intellectual bewilderment and abuses of the past, and less likely to be misunderstood by the present generation. Yet the word itself is such a noble one, and so closely interwoven with modern thought and usage, that it seems worth while to redeem it and restore it again to its rightful office,—to designate that prevailing element in the religious life of our day which distinguishes it from the rigid, unprogressive, and traditional systems of the past.

Let us see if we cannot come to this right understanding of it, and vindicate its continued employment in the service of a rational and spiritual Christianity. And, first, let us learn what liberalism is *not*, thus freeing our minds from any mistaken notions concerning it. We shall arrive at this desirable result in the quickest way, perhaps, by the use of a concrete

illustration suggested by the religious life of the New West.

When one of our missionaries enters a town for the purpose of founding therein a congregation of free thinking but religiously inclined persons, he usually sends out an invitation to all in the community who are "liberals" or liberally disposed to attend his services. A motley collection of people usually responds to that appeal. Among them are believers of every school of religious opinion, as well as unbelievers in any religion whatever,—old and new style Unitarians and Universalists, the mildly or liberal orthodox, representatives of the Spiritualist faith, Christian Scientists, Theosophists, Progressive Friends, and Swedenborgians, and many forms of individual eccentricity which remind one of the poet Coleridge's dictum. After a particularly oracular utterance he was asked, "Of what church may that be the doctrine?" "That," said Coleridge, "is the doctrine of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Infallible Church, of which I am at present the only member." To these must be added free thinkers of every possible shade of opinion and of no opinion; agnostics who do not know, indifferentists who do not care to know, sceptics who claim we cannot know; atheists who deny the validity of all religious ideas; secularists who wage a fierce polemic against all churches, ministers, and beliefs, and hold that enlightened people (like themselves) have gotten over such pitiful superstition; materialists who are positive that they alone possess the true philosophy of life.

To add to the difficulty of our missionary's task there is the greatest difference also in the intellectual capacity, the culture and moral outlook of his hearers.

There are among them men and women of the highest intelligence, the broadest views, the most inclusive sympathies, and others of the densest ignorance, the narrowest prejudices, the crudest opinions, the most bigoted and scornful temper. And, as one who has had large experience tells us, "what is worst of all, the combative, narrow-minded men, whose whole ambition is iconoclasm, and who are liberal in nothing save in the quantity of vituperation which they hurl at churches, preachers, and religion, are commonly the loudest in their claim of being liberals; while the real liberals, of genuine intelligence and breadth of view, and charity towards others, whose aim is constructive rather than destructive, and who are working thoughtfully to build up a better religion instead of tearing down what religion there is in the world,—these are likely to be comparatively quiet and retiring. Thus often the loud-voiced iconoclasts and destructionists are the class of men that get to be known in our communities as liberals. And, unfortunately, when liberalism is spoken of, men think first of these as its representatives. In this way the cause of real liberality in religion is put in a false light, and seriously hurt."

Such are the varied, incongruous elements which flock to hear our missionary, and which he is to attempt to fuse and organize into a "liberal" church. For widely as they differ from each other, fiercely as they often antagonize each other's beliefs, they all alike claim to be "liberal."

Like a true apostle and fisher of men, our missionary casts his drag-net out into the deep, and is often surprised at the miraculous draught which is the result of his labor. Therein are big and little fish of every

school and kind; and not a few crabs, devil-fish, and other freaks are entangled in the net, which he could well afford to dispense with altogether.

Now, if the minister is a large pattern of a man; if with strong personal convictions and a clearly defined aim in his ministry he also cherishes a broad, inclusive spirit, has a lively sense of humor, and great store of patience, unselfishness, and persistent purpose, —in a word, if he is a natural leader and organizer of men, he will not be overcome by such obstacles. He will see beneath all these diversities of opinion some common ground of agreement and action. He will be able to speak the reconciling word that inspires his fellow-workers, for the most part, to mutual goodwill and united service for truth, justice, and humanity. Thus he will strengthen the spiritual instincts of their nature, and lead them to the larger trusts and hopes of the religious life,—God and Immortality.

It would seem, then, that a proper understanding, a right definition, of this oft-quoted, much-abused term "liberal," is greatly to be desired in the interests of clear thinking and spiritual faith.

What is it to be a liberal in religion?

1. Certainly a man is not liberal simply because he holds advanced or radical opinions. Whether he is liberal or not will depend on the spirit in which he holds them. If that spirit is narrow, unsympathetic with others' thought, scornful, intolerant, and irreverent,—such a man is not a liberal. He is a bigot, no matter how freely he has discarded the traditional creeds or how vehemently he denounces the authority of pope, council, church, or priesthood.

On the other hand, a man who still clings to these, who accepts the old dogmas and cherishes the tradi-

tional forms of piety, if he displays a broad and kindly temper towards those who differ from him in opinion, if he is ready to believe in others' sincerity, and is charitable towards their views, if, in a word, he is "reverent towards others' reverence," that man is a liberal, no matter how orthodox his creed may be.

Herein lies the justification of the current term, "liberal orthodox." Strictly speaking, according to the correct use of language, to call a person liberal orthodox is as irrational as it would be to speak of him as free bound or rightly wrong. For orthodoxy implies a correct belief, it stands for infallible authority in matters of faith, —the authority of church, creed, or scripture. It gives no countenance to any laxity of views, any individual independence of judgment. It permits no tolerance to dissent, no liberality towards heretics. But men's hearts are usually larger than their minds. They are not always logical in their conduct, whatever they may be in their theological opinion. Happily for themselves and the race, many who claim to be orthodox in their theology are truly, however inconsistently, liberal in their sympathies. They may occupy orthodox pulpits, but they are more truly to be reckoned broad-minded and liberal men than are many so-called free thinkers. For it is not the holding of this or that set of opinions, however advanced, but the spirit in which they are held, which marks the true liberal. It is a great misfortune for the cause of free thought in religion that this is not more generally recognized by the advocates of a rational faith. The mistaken notion widely prevails among them that a man is liberal simply because he is opposed to orthodox forms of belief. The man who vehemently denounces the inherited traditional

creeds and institutions of Christendom, and ridicules and heaps scorn upon those that uphold them, usually justifies his course on the ground that he is liberal.

And yet, if my contention be true, he is simply a narrow, prejudiced, intolerant fanatic, only—a fanatic for free instead of conventional religion. Both types are equally unlovely and harmful to the cause of true religion. But the radical bigot is more hateful than the orthodox, because the logic of his principles ought to teach him to the contrary, and lead him to employ more sympathetic and gentle methods in religion. Orthodoxy, if consistently carried out, naturally leads to intolerance and persecution. But heterodoxy should prompt to the largest forbearance, charity, and kindliness. The worst displays of illiberality to-day are to be found in the free thinkers' conventions and the columns of certain of their newspapers, while not a few professedly orthodox journals are weekly illustrations that men may profess the traditional views and yet display the most broad and reconciling temper.

2. But now it should be added that, if zeal for advanced views in religion doesn't necessarily constitute a liberal, neither does indifference to all religious views. Here we touch upon another mistaken notion current among free thinking people. Such will often tell you that a man's creed is of no importance. It is his conduct by which he must be judged. Indeed, it is almost a cant form of speech for such to say, "It doesn't matter what a man believes, so that his life is right." But this is a mere sophism by which we deceive ourselves. It will not do thus to underrate the importance of intellectual opinions in religion. What a man believes really has a great influence on his character and conduct. If you were about to employ a

physician, you would not say that it didn't matter what school of medicine he belonged to, what theories of disease he held, or what he believed the therapeutic effect of his remedies to be. If you were seeking a farmer to take charge of your farm or orchard, you would not think that his opinions about soils and crops and methods of cultivation would make no difference in his conduct of your affairs.

Why, then, should you suppose that a man's religious opinions will have no influence on his moral life?

It may not always be easy to trace this influence in the case of individuals. For, as has already been said, individual believers may hold their opinions very loosely and be a great deal broader than their avowed creeds. But even these, if we examine closely into the sources of their conduct, will be found to have certain interior convictions or principles of action which color and shape their lives, and which are their true creed, whatever they may profess to believe.

On the larger plane of social and national life, however, it will be easy to show that true intellectual beliefs are of vast importance to mankind. The creed of a people largely determines the character of that people. The creed of the Hindu that this material universe is an illusion, and that life is a vain and undesirable thing, is largely responsible for the nerveless, hopeless, apathetic character of their civilization.

The Inquisitor in Spain believed, in common with his age, that God hated and punished everlastingly all heretics. This belief profoundly affected the acts of a Torquemada and his priestly colleagues. They thought they did right in torturing and destroying thousands of their fellow-men. Will any one claim,

in the lurid light of such testimony, that it makes no difference what a man believes? How can his life be right if the interior convictions and principles of action which guide that life are not right? Our life, in a true sense, is only the expression of our beliefs.

Another illustration: A few summers since, in Switzerland, I observed, as others have observed, the great influence the creed of a people has upon the life of that people. As I passed from the Protestant to the Catholic cantons, I found a vast difference between them. It was not a difference in race or of antecedents or of social conditions or of government. They are the same people, to all appearances. The climate, scenery, material environment, industries, and pursuits are essentially alike. It is their mental attitude towards nature and life which is so wholly unlike, and alters their entire demeanor and outlook, so that they do not seem like the same people. This difference is seen in all the relations of their domestic, industrial, social, and political life. Their dress, manners, conversation, and the general aspect of their farms, villages, and towns, display it. It is a difference grounded in diversity of creeds, conceptions of the universe, and of moral and religious duty. Thus Roman Catholic religion produces one type of character and civilization, and Protestantism another type. The difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman, a German and an Italian, a citizen of Belfast and one of Tipperary, is not so much one of race or environment: it is one of religion.

The opinions we hold on these great questions are, therefore, of profound consequence to our personal and social life. The Scripture says truly, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

To be liberal, therefore, is not to hold this or that set of opinions. It is not to antagonize other people's opinions. It is not, finally, to have no opinion at all. Liberalism is a temper, an attitude of the mind, a disposition of the heart towards truth. Liberalism is the supremacy of the spirit over the letter in religion. It is the mind in a state of growth, and is thus distinguished from orthodoxy, which is the type of a mind that has stopped growing, which accepts finalities in religion, and claims that its opinions are infallible.

Liberalism recognizes that all opinions are more or less fluctuating; but it clings all the more firmly to the interior principles, the great central convictions which determine the character of individuals and people.

What are these principles? One of them is that we may trust the veracity of the human reason; that a divine thought rules the universe, and our human thought is its faithful reflection. Our reason does not, indeed, teach us everything; but, so far as it goes, it is trustworthy, and it goes far enough to give us a right interpretation of nature and an adequate philosophy for the ordering of our lives.

Liberalism furthermore affirms that all thought is free, that to attempt to cram it into dogmatic formulas, and thus arrest its growth, is a crime against nature and an impiety against God. The true liberal recognizes that there should be progress in religion as in all else. He keeps his mind open to every influence that will increase his knowledge, enlarge his mind, and improve his character. He seeks to grow as the plant grows, as the tree adds layer to layer, as the whole creation develops the ever-increasing purpose of its Maker. In a word, the liberal thinker is an

evolutionist in his philosophy. He believes with the poet,—

"Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

The true liberal maintains, moreover, that, while belief profoundly affects conduct, yet conduct in turn is the true test of belief; that men's deeds reveal, and justify or condemn their creeds. He holds that thought is good, but life is better, and that he is most likely to lead a noble life who has the clearest vision of truth and is most faithful to his ideals.

Once more, liberalism believes in sincerity in matters of faith. It fearlessly utters its honest convictions. It abhors cowardice, it deprecates mental reserve, it despises hypocrisy. It speaks the truth fearlessly, but it speaks it in love. For love is the universal solvent which melts even the rigidity of dogma and tradition. No mind can be truly free which entertains a hateful, scornful spirit against another mind. The true liberal not only tolerates, but loves his fellow-man. He is charitable to their intellectual errors and sympathetic with their endeavors after truth. He reverences their reverences. He knows how gradual is the change from one set of opinions to another. Therefore, he is not impatient with error, if it be error held in the spirit of truth. The only unpardonable sin in his eyes is uncharity,—a loveless heart, an intolerant mind.

This is our answer to the question, "What is it to be a liberal in Religion?" These are the liberal things which the liberal devises, and by which he shall stand. This is the true interior spirit of Christianity. "The hour is come when the true worshippers shall worship

the Father in spirit and in truth." "The spirit of truth shall lead you into all truth." It is the teaching of Paul. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "Serve the Lord in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter." Finally, it is the prevailing temper and purpose of our Unitarian Church, which, in the language of the hymn we sing together so often, declares:—

> "The seekers of the light are one,"—
> One in the freedom of the truth,
> One in the joy of paths untrod,
> One in the soul's perennial youth,
> One in the larger thought of God,—
>
> The freer step, the fuller breath,
> The wide horizon's grander view,
> The sense of life that knows no death,—
> The life that maketh all things new.

STEPS OF BELIEF

By James Freeman Clarke

Size, 5 x 7; pages, 311; price, 60 cents *net;* postage, 8 cents.

AN able advocate's successful defence of Rational Christianity against Atheism, Free Religion, and Romanism. In a vigorous, unprejudiced, and frank way the author emphasizes the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion while at the same time undermining the positions upon which these three opponents of Rational Christianity take their stand.

ORTHODOXY: Its Truths and Errors

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ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS IN RELIGION

By James Freeman Clarke

Size, 4 1-4 x 6; pages, 148; price, cloth, 35 cents *net;* postage, 5 cents; price, paper, 25 cents *net;* postage, 4 cents.

THESE lectures are admirable presentations of the vital principles of Christian faith, containing many helpful suggestions, especially for those disturbed by the transition from the old to the new religious thought. The subjects are: I. Faith and Belief: Essential Belief concerning God. II. Christ and Christianity. III. The Bible. IV. The Church and Worship. V. Christian Experience. VI. The Future Life.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2.00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of .....dollars.

[No. 228]

THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

BY

REV. JOSEPH MAY, D.D.

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N.Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

At the beautiful spring season the people of the Christian world very generally unite to celebrate the supposed resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Influenced by association and sympathy and by the love of a festal occasion, many of our Unitarian congregations are wont to mark the period with tokens of gladness and services of rejoicing.

In most cases, I think, our people attempt to make some discriminations as to their motives in participating in the Easter occasion. They seek to give to it the significance of a celebration of the revived life of nature in the spring or the deeper sentiment of a festival of human immortality.

It is, I fear, difficult to make such discriminations clear; and, as I have reason to think that, at present, belief in the physical resurrection of Jesus does not widely prevail among us, as I myself unqualifiedly disbelieve in the event, I feel it to be a duty to state, formally, the dissenting view in regard to this crowning miracle of the traditional history of Jesus.

I do not believe that Jesus rose from the dead, except by that spiritual resurrection by which all the children of men, on the dissolution of the body, pass into a new life beyond the grave.

The story of his physical and earthly resurrection is, in my judgment, mythical,* not historical.

In this opinion in regard to the narrative I suppose that I am accompanied by the large majority of the clergy of our church, and equally by the large majority of our laity. Our scholars are, I think, unanimous in the same view. To state the position of liberal scholars in a word, they find it easier to account for the existence of the resurrection-narrative as a myth than to justify so exceptional an occurrence as historical on the evidence on which it rests.

Prominent among such scholars, and one of the latest to discuss the story in detail, was the venerable Rev. James Martineau of England, the most spiritual of our preachers; at the time of his death perhaps the ablest of English metaphysicians, who brought his scholarship down to the latest date; and who in his "Seat of Authority in Religion" examines this question elaborately, and convincingly exhibits the mythical character of the resurrection-story.

A more recent work by Professor J. Estlin Carpenter, of Oxford, occupies the same position, and clearly exhibits the mode of development of the whole mythical element in the New Testament.

Even among members of the Orthodox Christian communion the beginnings of the same process of thought are plainly seen, which, by explaining, explains away the miraculous element in these ancient narratives.

As was said many years ago by an eminent scholar and preacher of our body, the miraculous element is no

* "I call any story a myth which for good reasons is not to be taken historically, and yet is not a wilful fabrication with intent to deceive, but the natural growth of wonder and tradition, or a product of the Spirit uttering itself in a narrative form."—*Rev. Frederic H. Hedge, D.D.*

longer a prop and support of the Christian tradition. It is a weight which Christianity has to carry. Jesus is not believed because he worked the miracles. The miracles are believed because men are reluctant to detach from his revered personality any elements which have been felt to contribute to its dignity.

Elsewhere, certainly outside the Bible, the Protestant world of to-day unanimously rejects all miracles.* The Catholic Church professes to believe them of many of her saints of the present as well as of former generations. In this she is more consistent; for the one effective philosophical argument for the miracles of the New Testament is that which makes them still a part of the order of nature,—operations wrought by powerful human wills, in virtue of a high spirituality and of unfamiliar but genuine natural laws. This obviously justifies the expectation of such works by other men of exceptional spiritual and moral force as well as by Jesus and the Apostles.

In this expectation, however, we are disappointed. Protestantism, at least, does not find authentic modern instances of miracle. Even the miracles of the New Testament, other than those of Jesus, are seldom, I think, enlarged upon, if maintained, by our modern scholars; and I doubt if intelligent and educated Romanists believe very heartily in those of to-day which are reported among their communion.

The position upon which I rest in the discussion of

* But in 1748 the denial of the post-apostolic miracles by Middleton occasioned as profound a shock to religious sensibility as did the publication of Strauss's mythical theory of the gospel miracles in 1835. In the third century a similar treatment, by Origen, of the Old Testament narrative equally offended the religious world. See Rev. Dr. Hedge's admirable discussion of the mythical element in the New Testament, in his "Ways of the Spirit," where the spiritual truth and value which may attach to myths is luminously shown.

the present question is this. The story of the resurrection of Jesus is only a part of the tissue of miracle which a credulous, unscientific age wove instinctively into the tradition of his life and death. It grew out of the same causes, its acceptance and propagation depended on the same conditions, as did the others. While the legend of the miraculous birth, with its attendant angelic phenomena, is more fanciful, it is of exactly the same kind of narratives; and, while the Christian consciousness, by a refined and elevated instinct dismissed the trivial stories preserved to us in the apocryphal New Testament, these are, also, of the same kind, originating in the same way, and only differing in their want of dignity and suggestiveness.

I will not here discuss with you the origin of the belief in miracles and the particular subject of the miracles of the New Testament. If you share, as I suppose you do, the present wide-spread incredulity on this subject, you are fully justified by the famous dictum of an acute philosopher of the past century, whose sceptical vein made him odious, but who in one brief logical statement exhausted the argument. Hume maintained that, in every case of alleged miracle, it is more likely that testimony should err than that a miracle should have occurred.*

The Christian world has struggled with this pregnant aphorism for a hundred and fifty years, but it has not escaped from it. Instinctive recognition of the truth which it pithily expresses has led to a

* Hume's exact language is "that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish. And even in that case there is a mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force which remains after deducting the inferior."

steady decline of belief in the miraculous as science, intelligence, and culture have advanced.

The result is admirably exhibited by Lecky, in his "History of European Morals," where his examination of the subject of miracle is as luminous as it is convincing. In the face of whatever evidence there is, belief in miracle always declines with growing popular intelligence. Lecky's remarkable discussion may also be summed up in a *dictum*. It is not, he shows, that the occurrence of miracles is discredited by argument. It is that, as intelligence advances, miracles cease to occur.*

It has not been, indeed, by demonstration of their scientific improbability that the miracles of the New Testament have lost credit with so many persons. It must be admitted that, on sufficient evidence, we must believe anything, no matter how unusual or how subversive of what we have hitherto determined. In these days of science we all understand and acknowledge this. We cannot pretend to limit by former experience the scope of the unknown forces of nature or of the mind.

But the ground has simply been taken from beneath the Scripture miracles of either Testament, and others by our better understanding of the nature of the writings in which their occurrence is recorded and of the working of men's minds in unscientific periods and in circumstances like those of the early followers of Jesus.

That in the New Testament we have a body of thoroughly innocent writings, documents essentially genuine, and in spirit, purpose, and intention truth-

* Lecky's "History of European Morals," vol. i. pp. 368 and following.

ful, is a statement which no one would seriously qualify.

Here are invaluable relics of the literature which grew up, as any such literature grows up, in the first century or two of Christianity; but the popular idea of what these writings individually are, how they were composed, what is their authority as testimony, is probably very imperfect, if not incorrect. Putting aside all question of their miraculous inspiration, which I need not consider here, the documents of the New Testament present to the student a problem in many respects very intricate.

The Gospels, with which we are now chiefly concerned, appear to the superficial reader as the artless accounts, by well-informed persons, of the life and preaching of Jesus as they had severally known them. We are accustomed to read these narratives as if they came, in form and directly, from the hands of his companions or near contemporaries. Tradition sanctions this view. But, so stated, it requires careful qualifications. The first three Gospels, in their present form, date, probably, from periods ranging from forty to seventy years after Jesus' death. It is possible that portions of their contents were even written down earlier,—perhaps considerably earlier,—or that they were founded, partly, on earlier narratives. But, in the largest part, at least, the traditions of Jesus' life and words had survived orally, and so continued, doubtless, for a generation, perhaps for half a century.* As we possess them, these first three Gospels are not, as they perhaps seem, the accounts by their authors of what they personally knew of Jesus, his

* Westcott's "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," pp. 181 and following; Carpenter's "First Three Gospels," p. 61.

life and his death. What is true is this. The first three Gospels contain the popular traditions which were current in the Christian community concerning Jesus about half a century after he had passed away. They preserve for us what was then generally believed about him. They include exquisite fragments of his remembered utterances. They contain hints enough of his character to enable us to form a very distinct and trustworthy portrait of him, which is immeasurably precious. But, after all, they are properly described, not as careful biographies by competent, nearly contemporary witnesses, but as anonymous compilations of the traditions of their period.

Thus these writings reflect their period. They are, in a literary sense, artless. They are beyond cavil truthful in spirit and purpose; but they preserve the biography of Jesus as affected by all the prepossessions of such an age and by the ideas and theories which had begun to grow up about him, including, naturally and inevitably, the element of miracle, the marvellous, the supernatural.

They could not have come from that age, and not have included this element. It was alive and ubiquitous in the thought of that period. It was expected and looked for in any remarkable career. Of any exceptional man who should present himself as a religious leader, the people were prompt to ask, "What sign showest thou that we may believe?" * Miracle being a thing of every-day life in men's belief, its supposed manifestations were described as naturally and artlessly as any other events.

The Fourth Gospel is to be distinguished in some

* John vi. 30; also ii. 18. See also Matt. xii. 28; Mark viii. 11; Luke xi. 16 etc.

important respects from the other three. It is not merely a compilation of popular traditions and relics of Jesus, such as Luke in his preface expressly describes his own narrative to be and implies that the others were. The Fourth dates from a much later period,—say A.D. 140,—and is properly a tract, written with a purpose, which it candidly avows (chap. xx. 31), to exhibit Jesus in a peculiar character, as the Hebrew Messiah and the Son of God. It is the work of a single hand,* and, as such, possesses unity, homogeneousness, and consecutiveness in its literary structure. But the tradition that it is by one of the twelve apostles, stoutly as it is defended, is actually a most slender thread, and is visibly yielding to the strain which modern scholarship is putting upon it. For one, I do not believe this Gospel to be by an apostle. So far as its historical contents are concerned, then, they are still, in substance like those of the others. They are still no more than the current popular tradition, amplified and developed by the passage of another half-century. The Fourth Gospel adds nothing to the validity of the testimony of the other three. In fact, its comparative literary artificiality, its later date, and the fact that it was written with an avowed dogmatic purpose, characteristic of a developed stage of Christian opinion, diminish the value of its historical testimony. It cannot be appealed to with the confidence with which we refer to the others for historical evidence.

To repeat, then, what we have in the Gospels is substantially this,—a compilation of the traditions which were floating in the Christian community forty, fifty,

* And one much too highly cultivated, I cannot but think, for that of a Galilean fisherman.

sixty, or a hundred or a hundred and fifty years after Jesus' death, and of the relics preserved of his teachings; these materials, originally fragmentary and anonymous, edited and connected together by sympathetic and intelligent hands with such art as they had. They possess, in their details, not the authority which belongs to the asseverations of a trustworthy eye-witness, but the value which attaches to the popular traditions of a sincere, innocent and adoring, but credulous, unscientific, easily deluded community of disciples, more than ready to believe miraculous tales.

It is utterly impracticable for the intelligent mind of the present day to be overborne in its judgment of the ways of God by the testimony of such authorities, or would be so but for the influence of custom and of the long-established veneration which these documents have naturally secured. As containing all that we know of Jesus and his utterances, they are beyond estimate precious. We may be infinitely grateful to have so much. We can but admire their simplicity, their candor, their purity, dignity, and grace. But such popular traditions, however charmingly composed, cannot command our belief at points where they would overset all that in the brightest light of the present age we seem to know of God and nature. And, fortunately, it is now possible to analyze them, and largely to account for the phenomena which they present.

Compendiously stated, it is the result of recent scholarship to show with much clearness how the more marvellous characteristics attributed to the person and career of Jesus are the reflection back upon them of a subsequent period, when the popular faith had highly, but unnaturally, exalted him, and popular imagination had had time to develop the simple facts of his actual

career into the remarkable forms which, at certain points, his story has come to wear.

It is impossible now to tell just what Jesus' disciples thought of him while living; for we have no unqualified testimony to this point, all our testimony having been worked over in the popular mind repeatedly before it took its existing forms of statement. But the things of a marvellous nature recorded in the Gospels, if true, must have been known to his actual companions and early disciples,—for example, his miraculous birth and its attendant prodigies, the visit of the wise men, the descent of the Holy Spirit as a dove at his baptism, and the attestation of his peculiar sonship to God; yet of these things there is no trace in the body of the Gospels, where the life of the apostles with their Master is recorded. They are never even referred to, much less appealed to, in justification of any claims of a supernatural quality or commission for Jesus. They are obviously myths, which grew up in later day, and were projected back into the history from the time when Jesus was fully established as a supernatural character in the faith of his people. This is very generally admitted, of the events I just specified, by intelligent persons to-day.

But the same, I would have you see, is essentially true of all the rest of the miraculous element in the story of Jesus. If we had the real facts, uncolored by tradition and credulous imagination, we should probably find that Jesus' actual followers neither knew him to work miracles nor perhaps so believed while he was with them. But they wondered at his great endowments. They began to theorize about him and to think him some peculiar being. They accepted him as the Messiah of the Jews, and the next age made him the Son

of God. Then the events of his life took on, by degrees, supernatural quality and form and color. The ardent faith of his followers inevitably, but insensibly, filled out the picture of his life and deeds with details imperceptibly growing, into which the miraculous largely entered. What was natural became supernatural. Incidents wholly mythical attached themselves to the story. And in this condition we have received it.

This process, as I intimate, was in no sense intentional or dishonest. It was by the spontaneous action of the mental and moral forces of such a time. It is by no means peculiar to the case of Jesus, but paralleled in many others.* We can even see it, in qualified forms, going on around ourselves in the cases of individuals who become highly idealized in the popular imagination. It is even a little less extensive in its results in Jesus' case than we usually suppose. The purely thaumaturgic miracles ascribed to him, like the turning of water to wine, the blasting of the fig-tree, and the stilling of the storm, are quite few. A number of the others are plainly misconceptions or exaggerations of natural facts, as the finding of money in the fish's mouth or his walking on the water. The great bulk of the miracles are those of healing, and may almost all represent a power of influence over the minds of the sick, which in its essence would not be uncongenial to so elevated and forcible a character as his, and which is exaggerated rather than perverted in the reports of it which we have received.

But, in the form which they wear, these stories are plainly mythical growths, the product chiefly, if not wholly, of the period succeeding the death of Jesus, when faith in him had become intense; when he was

* See Carpenter's "First Three Gospels," p. 152, following, and p. 204.

fully believed in as a special and supernatural character; when he was eagerly expected to return from heaven, put an end to the existing order of things, and reign with his saints in a glorified state age-long.

The only wonder is that the miracle-stories of the New Testament are not more extravagant than they are. No doubt there was a large body of others, of a more melodramatic quality, like those preserved in the Apocryphal Gospels, which the Christian consciousness, as I have already said, rejected as trivial and unworthy before the canon of the New Testament was closed. Stories of this inferior sort maintained credit with the less educated of the Christian people, as today ignorant Catholics believe many fanciful tales of the Madonna and the saints which their educated fellow-churchmen deride. The superior minds (as those must have been who addressed themselves to the compilation of Jesus' story in these four standard biographies) naturally rejected almost all of these.*

Here, then, is what I would have you observe. Our modern consciousness does but reject the whole miraculous element of these and other ancient traditions as that of the early Church rejected the more absurd and undignified stories of the kind which popular belief attached to the history of Jesus.

To the modern mind all tales of miracles are trivial.

It is a tempting but always treacherous task to try to account for the origin and growth of particular

* I may say here that the history of myths abundantly shows that the period between the death of Jesus and the publication of the earliest of the Gospels provides more than ample time for the forces which produce the mythical elements in such a history to work. Myths are not necessarily a thing of slow growth. Often they spring up, as it were, in a night. The shortest possible allowance of time before the materials embodied in the Gospels took their shape in literature is more than sufficient for the mythical elaboration and coloring to have been effected.

mythical stories. It has been well that this task should be essayed as it was, for example, in that monumental work, "The Life of Jesus," by Strauss. But it can never, in any case, be finally convincing. At most, all that one can do in this way is to show how a mythical story may have arisen, and thus to make reasonable the contention that it is mythical. It is pretty easy to account for the story of the money in the fish's mouth as arising in the fact of Jesus' directing his disciples to sell a fish, and so obtain the money; or for that of his walking on the sea as a mistake for his walking by the sea. But such explanations become uncertain as they become intricate, and we are not to hazard a clear conviction that the mythical tendency is a real one upon our success in showing how it may have worked in particular instances. At such a distance, to explain how a certain mythical narrative grew up corresponds in form very closely to the impossible logical task of proving a universal negative.*

We may detect myth in a thousand cases where we cannot possibly explain its particular mode of growth.

I do not propose, then, to attempt to show in detail how the story of Jesus' resurrection grew up. One who rejects it as mythical is by no means bound so to do. To justify the reasonableness of its rejection as authentic history, it is sufficient to detect beyond question in the New Testament the presence of an extensive mythical element, from which come the narratives of Jesus' miraculous birth, with its attendant angels and their celestial songs, of his various miracles, and of his resurrection and ascension, and to

* See Lecky's "History of European Morals," vol. i. p. 373; Carpenter's "First Three Gospels," pp. 152, 207.

refer each and all of these stories to the one common source.

Yet it is quite obvious to any thoughtful student of the times, and of the circumstances of the immediate followers of Jesus, what general causes pressed urgently upon them, and favored the belief, which became so intense and effective among them, that he had risen from the dead. Not difficult for men of that generation to accept and credit, it was, on the other hand, absolutely essential for them to have the support and comfort of such a belief. They would have been utterly desolate and hopeless without it. In this sense the continuance of the movement depended on it, and stood or fell with it.

The disciples of Jesus had become fully possessed by the conviction that he realized the Messianic hope of the Jews. While Jesus, if he accepted it for himself, highly spiritualized the Messiah idea, his followers to the very last, as the Gospels plainly exhibit, thought of it in the conventional, mundane sense common to their nation's imagination. It was to be the glorified but earthly reign of the Messiah over his redeemed people.

The arrest and crucifixion of Jesus suddenly blasted this hope, as applied to him, and filled his disciples with consternation. The whole structure of their selfish anticipations was thrown down. Personally, his nearer followers were left most forlorn,—alone, without their leader, in a strange city, and in danger from the Jewish hierarchy and the Roman government on the one side and from the populace upon the other.*

* Up to Jesus' death, it should be remembered, his avowed disciples, especially the twelve apostles, were almost all Galileans. They had accompanied him to Jerusalem on his last journey, full of hope in his manifestation of himself as the Messiah; and, when the tragical result occurred,

But, with a little time for the restoration of their composure amid familiar scenes, their hope, which had been for the moment prostrated, would begin to revive. In the actual immortality of the souls of men, Jews of that period were widely accustomed to believe. At least, they were all familiar with the idea. The large and influential Pharisaic party cherished it ardently, although the other great sect, the Sadducees, denied it. The first reassuring thought of the disciples, doubtless, was that Jesus, though dead, was not dead, but still in being; that he was in paradise, and that thus, though in ways different from their former expectations, his Messiahship might still be realized and vindicated.

If he was still in being, the idea that he should manifest himself to some of his followers would have presented no difficulty to men at that time. The spiritual element in men has always, to the ordinary mind, seemed to consist of matter in a state of extreme tenuity, and therefore capable, under some conditions, of becoming tangible to sense.

A very slight cause among persons of that day, and in the circumstances of Jesus' disciples, would have set in motion the belief that he had manifested himself to some of them; and, once started, such a belief would have spread like wildfire.

It is exactly thus, in response to deep necessities of the heart, that myths arise and propagate themselves.

If, for example, it was the fact that, on visiting his tomb a day or two after his interment, the sepulchre was found empty; if Jesus' body had been removed

they were far from their homes, and, indeed, like sheep without a shepherd. It is not at all wonderful that they were for the moment astounded and dismayed, and forsook him and fled. The traditions intimate pretty clearly that after his death they did what was most natural,—hurried back to Galilee.

by its custodians, for which there might be many good reasons; if it could not at once be discovered, and its absence was not explained,—the inference might readily, and very likely immediately, have been drawn that their Master had arisen from the dead.

If, as the tradition in all its actual forms describes, the first visitors to the tomb were women, their more excitable and imaginative natures might easily have been impressed, by some half-seen object or slightly peculiar experience, with the notion that they had met angels or other heavenly messengers.

That the body of Jesus disappeared seems the only essential condition of the legend having birth; and to its disappearance the tradition points quite definitely. Matthew tells us that the Jews declared it to have been removed by some of the disciples,—a very credible statement, though rejected by the evangelist. It is the ingenious hypothesis of some that Joseph of Arimathea, who had allowed it to be laid in his new tomb, removed it, lest its presence there should lead to some commotion and embroil him with the Jews.

It seems probable, at any rate, that its disappearance was, in the excited state of mind of the disciples, the original source of the belief in Jesus' resurrection. This cause may have operated at once, and the idea of his return to life may have been generated in those two or three days. It is, perhaps, more probable that it did not spread so suddenly.*

In the Second Gospel we have the simplest—probably, therefore, the most primitive—account of the events after Jesus' death. That Gospel properly terminates at the middle of the last chapter, as is indicated

* See Martineau's "Seat of Authority in Religion," p. 372.

in the Revised Version. Here, in this earliest form of the story, there is properly nothing supernatural at all. How such a tale grows is interestingly seen on comparing this primitive form of it with the elaborated accounts in Matthew and Luke, and still more with the later one of the Fourth Gospel.

At the moment it might very well be that the disappearance of Jesus' remains should set in train a hundred wondering doubts and hopes and theories. That the agitated women at the tomb saw something strange, saw somebody in white, saw Jesus himself,—steps like these would readily be taken by a body of persons otherwise crushed in their dearest hope, and not in the least fortified by science and mature intelligence against miraculous beliefs.

In fact, what is especially noteworthy about the stories of the resurrection is (as I have remarked about the miracle-stories of the Gospels generally) that they are not more abundant and elaborate than they are.* In the authentic portion of Mark, Jesus' resurrection is affirmed, but no reappearance is described. And even the appendix (doubtless a wholly genuine relic of the early Christian literature) adds only the briefest statement, not description, of three appearances, of which the latter, at least, is almost incredible, if only from the light in which Jesus is placed by it and the disregard by the eleven apostles of his solemn injunction.

In such vague and general assertions of a fact did this afterward confident and wide-spread belief arise.

Matthew's narrative is actually but little more elaborate or more definite. It is stated that an angel ap-

* This, to my mind, points to a later rather than an immediate period for their origin.

peared to the women, that Jesus himself appeared and briefly spoke to them, that afterwards he met the eleven in Galilee, though some doubted that it was he; and this is all.

In the Third Gospel, which was written, probably, after the lapse of nearly or quite three-quarters of a century after Jesus' death, the account is somewhat further amplified, and its details are a little more definite in form.

But it is not until we come to the Fourth Gospel (which was written, as I have said, under the full prepossession of, and with the avowed purpose to exhibit, the Sonship to God of Jesus, and probably not before A.D. 140) that we have a collection of highly elaborated narratives of the intercourse of the risen Master with his disciples.

I have no hesitation, therefore, in my view of the strictly mythical origin of the story of Jesus' resurrection. An examination of the statements in regard to it made by Saint Paul, who is the only nearly contemporary witness whom we are able to identify, only confirms the opinion that it grew essentially out of the primary conviction that the Messiah could not die; that Jesus was, therefore, alive after his seeming death; that he appeared, in some ethereal form of manifestation, to his followers. Paul had, of course, no personal knowledge of the facts of Jesus' life. He expressly states how little he cared for or examined the testimony of the original apostles. It is altogether doubtful if he regarded Jesus as having risen in the same body which was laid in the tomb. Paul places the appearance of Jesus to himself on the occasion of his conversion (which certainly, if real, was a visionary manifesta-

tion) fully and exactly on a plane with his appearances to the other disciples.

Certainly, whatever be true as to the event of Jesus' return to life, he never effectively resumed his place among living men after the event of his death. Whatever reappearances of his person are alleged, they are all of a phantasmal character. He enters through closed doors while men are speaking of him. Men doubt about his identity. He is mistaken for a "spirit." The scenes are all dramatic and unreal. Not one of the alleged Christophanies occurred in the presence of opponents or in public, unless we so class the occasion, barely asserted, but not described, by Saint Paul, when Jesus is affirmed to have appeared to "above five hundred at once." On several occasions the incredulity of some of the witnesses is a marked feature of the occurrence.

One especial word. We must not be misled by the exceeding simplicity and naturalness and artlessness of the gospel narratives into mistaking these characteristics for the tokens of historic validity and accuracy. These qualities in the New Testament literature betray, certainly, as I have said, the truthful spirit of the writers, and their ingenuous confidence in the reality of the events which they narrate. But, as repeatedly intimated, to men of such an era miraculous events were as likely to occur as any others; and they therefore describe them with the same naturalness and simplicity as normal ones. And, when men report with truthful spirit what they themselves believe, the embellishments with which they unconsciously and instinctively round out their narratives will, usually, be as natural in form, as artless, as truthful-seeming, as the rest of their narrations.

In a word, as applied to the relations of truthful men, describing what they themselves receive as fact, verisimilitude is not a test of historical truth.*

When a man is consciously trying to deceive, his inventions almost inevitably betray him to a critical reader; but, when what he tells is true to himself, nature will speak in his unconscious exaggerations as clearly and as simply as in the rest of his story. The legends of the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament are narrated with the same *naïveté* as that which appears and charms us in the narratives of Jesus' miraculous acts. In the passage† where Moses meets Jehovah, to renew the tables of the Law, the narrator (as has been remarked) describes the appearance to a mortal man of the Almighty Creator of the universe in the same simple terms with which he tells of the man's arising in the morning.

Finally, I would refer to one particular objection very gravely urged by some to bar a doubt of the historical reality of the event of the resurrection of Jesus.

It is said, if this event was not an historical fact, then the faith of the orthodox Christian world, at a most crucial point, rests upon a delusion.

I think that it does so rest.

Nor is there anything remarkable or exceptional in

* Professor J. H. Mahaffy, the eminent student of Greek history and literature, commenting on the artlessness of the style of the Iliad and Odyssey, remarks as follows: "I am convinced that all the critics, even Grote and the sceptical Germans, have overrated the accuracy of the pictures of life given in these poems. They have been persuaded by the intense reality and the natural simplicity which have made these scenes unapproachable in their charm; and they have thought that such qualities could only coexist with a faithful and simple reproduction of the circumstances actually surrounding the poet's life. But, surely, this argument, irresistible up to a certain point, has been carried too far." ("Social Life in Greece," p. 11.)

† Exodus xxxiv.

this. For it is abundantly illustrated by the facts of the history of religions that, while the moral influence and spiritual value of any form of faith must always be largely in proportion to the reality and truth of its historical and its spiritual sources, the practical issues of faith in belief and act are powerful, not necessarily in proportion to the validity of its foundations, but to its own warmth and vividness. And in the history of religions these qualities have often been exhibited in connection with beliefs the most baseless as to fact and most illogical as to theory. The world-religion which stands next to Christianity in vitality and force, the Mohammedan, certainly rests largely upon illusions. Many of the sects of Christianity have inspired their members to labor unwearied, to suffer with the utmost fortitude, and to die without flinching in support of the claims of wholly visionary leaders and for points of doctrine which to Christians of to-day seem trivial. In Mormonism we have had an instance in our own time, and at our own doors, of fanatic zeal by no means dependent on or proportioned to the authenticity or the reasonableness of the basis of a religious system.

And, if it be true that the mighty arch of orthodox Christianity has rested with one pier upon an event which we now determine to be unhistorical, this only parallels the fact that with the other it rests upon a pure myth in the story of Adam and Eve and the Fall of Man.

Happily, it is upon firmer and more intelligible foundations that our modern Christian belief in the immortality of the soul rests.*

* The American Unitarian Association will send upon application statements of the reasons for belief in immortality.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

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[No. 229]

THE WONDERFUL HOPE

BY

REV. CHARLES F. DOLE, D.D.

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N.Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE WONDERFUL HOPE.

It is very easy to repeat lightly the words, "We believe in the Life Everlasting." But ask ourselves what we mean by these words, and we are filled with wonder at the splendid audacity of our thought. We cannot define what we mean; we cannot tell what immortality is; we cannot explain how the gulf between this life which we know and the unknown life beyond the gate of death can be spanned. We simply aspire and hope for this unknown life. We think that it will be altogether richer in joy, nobler in companionship, fuller of the sweetness and light of affection, infinitely more constant and satisfying than the mere gleams of life that flash upon us and then fade where we now live. This is nearly all that we can say by way of describing our hope. We believe that we face life, and not death.

The standing wonder is that we hold such a hope. What marvellous instinct is behind it, reinvigorating it in every generation? Death is everywhere. We each expect to meet it. Nevertheless, there is that in us which expects not to die. It can hardly be a merely material world in which this bold and tremendous hope comes to birth and survives and lights up men's faces, —peasants and thinkers, poets and men of affairs, who say in many tongues, "We hope."

The fact is that we live here and now in a world of

wonder and surprises. Science in no respect lessens this sense of wonder. Ever the range of the possibilities of the universe widens. Our science pushes its investigations daily into a broader circumference, only to meet afresh the realm of mystery,—the vast unknown. The most that science has yet done is to change our attitude toward the unknown. We had feared it as the realm of darkness; we have learned now to have confidence in it as the realm of light and law. But the wonder and the mystery, however lighted up with the sunbeams of growing intelligence, order, and unity, still hold their unfathomable depths. What is this marvel of life, here and now? Whence does it flow? What imposes the laws of unity upon it and inspires both thought and aspiration? There is, in fact, no peculiar difficulty about the hope of the life to come. Every essential difficulty inheres in the wonder of the life that now is. Who shall explain this life of which we say that we know? We herein believe in the most wonderful and inscrutable fact.

Say, if you will, that "now are we the sons of God." This is a mighty thing to believe. Say that we are the children of the microscopic amœbas, and you have said nothing less wonderful, without in the least satisfying our intelligence. Let us be modest at the outset, and grant that the element of wonder and mystery is no reason why the thing which the mystery shrouds is not real.

It is often vaguely supposed that the modern or liberal churches with their untrammelled free thought, with their utter release from all absoluteness of authority, of a book or a church or a pope, are somehow fatally handicapped as regards the hope of immortality. Others have some assured and solid certainty: these

have nothing but a little shifting philosophy. Others have witnesses and proofs: these can give no valid reason for their faith. There could be no greater error than to think thus.

The truth is that all knowledge of every sort, so far as it is real, is the common heritage of the human race. There can be no monopoly of it. Whatever Roman Catholics or Theosophists know, we all know. They cannot, if they wished, keep their proofs or evidence in a corner. Whatever is good is good for all men and will prove itself good.

Many think that there is actual intercommunication between the inhabitants of this world and "the spirits of the departed," who come back to this world and give demonstration of their continued existence. Suppose that we do not happen to feel satisfied with the evidence for these supposed facts. Nevertheless, all that is valid in them is valid for all, as much as for those who confidently believe the "spiritualistic" doctrine.

Good and true men believe in the resurrection of Jesus. Other good and true men see no reason to believe the stories of a bodily resurrection. But, whether men believe or not, the fact, whatever it may prove to be, belongs equally to doubters and believers. The case is as if certain bonds and securities were put into our hands. We may count them at their par value or we may think them dubious or even worthless: it makes no difference as to their reality what we do with them, whether we put our confidence in them at once or depend upon other sources of income. The securities, such as they are, are ours. Burn the paper on which they are printed, if you choose, yet all the facts of the world are registered, and as soon as they bring in

actual returns they go to the credit of all of us. We, then, who are cautious in our valuation of the securities which men offer us for the hope of immortality, suffer no lasting disadvantage, even if we prove in the long run to have undervalued some of the certifications which have been presented to us. Meanwhile we have plenty of excellent ground, more than men usually put to service, out of which our hope grows.

I wish now to show that our hope of immortality, so far from being an uncertain and tenuous thing, really belongs in the same class with the most substantial facts which constitute life. If it ever seems vague, cloudy, and uncertain, it is because everything in which we most fondly believe is equally vague and uncertain, —in other words, because it belongs to a realm of "the things unseen."

Thus we all believe in the reality of love. Life would not be worth living without the fact of love. We are as sure of love as we are sure of any fact or of our own existence. Yet love is altogether indefinable. We know it without being able to describe it. No one can see it or measure or weigh it. We know only its manifestations, so far as it comes into our lives from outside. Even so, it expresses itself through the most subtle and indescribable modes of sensation, through the glance of the eyes, the pressure of a hand, the tone of a voice, a look or a smile. It is invisible, and "only a sentiment" in ourselves or in the hearts of our friends. But the solid earth and the "everlasting hills" are not so real as love is. No one makes love any less real to us by calling it a "sentiment." We rightly believe that the unseen world of sentiment is the real world in which we live. Now the hope of immortality belongs in the same real world.

Take another tenuous sentiment; namely, honor. Let us make light of it, as we easily can. Hear the greatest of our poets, as he derides honor. "What is honor? A word. What is in that word, 'honor'? What is that honor? Air. A trim reckoning. Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. Therefore, I'll none of it. Honor is a mere scutcheon." Does any fool take Shakespeare seriously in this outburst? On the contrary, we put the passage into the hands of our children to read in their schools. Whom does Shakespeare make to say this bit of folly? No hero, no king, no man of science, says this word, but a poltroon and a libertine. Who cares what this mere body of a man, Falstaff, says about honor? Whatever he says is only the foil that brings out in relief all the better what the great poet and all his readers know honor is. Let any one deride honor, even in a barroom, and there sets in a revulsion of feeling in the other direction. If the honor of an honorable man is not real, then nothing is real. In fact, it is because honor is real that houses and lands and gold coin and bills of exchange have their value.

Truth is another subtle, vague, and invisible thing. What is truth? Play with the question, if you like. The more precious it is,—the truth of men, and not merely the truth about things, the truth and constancy of the universe, by virtue of which we, its citizens, not being at the sport of chance and chaos, depend upon what we call law,—the more needful and precious truth is, the harder it becomes to define it by the measure of words. Nobly do Mr. Haeckel and Mr. Huxley and all the masters of science bow before the voice of truth, as if this purely mystic thing,

Truth, were a god. Whatever Truth bids, they must say; where Truth leads, they must follow, be the cost what it may. Yes, they sometimes tell us, "In the name of Truth we must renounce our faith and our hope,—sentiments only, which no science can prove." Think what these men thus say. "In the name of a sentiment, Truth, itself invisible, we must throw away another sentiment." Can they not see that these wonderful sentiments belong together, in one and the same realm? Can they not see that their own splendid reverence for truth, their willingness to say of the Truth, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," is itself of the same inscrutable order with all the most real things, honor and love and hope? Why, indeed, must I follow, as I surely must, this heaven-born instinct to go with the truth, and not also follow the kindred instinct, to go also with the noblest hopes of our common humanity?

Here, again, in the same list of glorious but quite invisible realities is the moral life, the sense of "ought," or duty. Is it not a reality? Does any one choose to ridicule it or to think it out of the world? You can do this if you choose. Hear, for example, the famous and quite plausible ancient passage in one of the Wisdom Books:—

"For we are born at all adventure: and we shall be hereafter as though we had never been:

"Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present: and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth.

"Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments: and let no flower of the spring pass by us:

"Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered:

"Let us oppress the poor righteous man; let us not spare the widow, nor reverence the ancient gray hairs of the aged.

"Let our strength be the law of justice: for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth."

This passage strikes every normal man exactly like Falstaff's words about honor. He who makes light of justice, purity, humanity, the sense of duty, we all feel (may we not say *know?*) is not a sane or whole man. Something has happened to him, like the work of disease. We do not trust his sight. On the other hand, we do instinctively trust our sentiments of duty. We may make our mistakes, but some universal, magnetic current felt in all of us commands our souls in the direction of righteousness and humanity. The fact is no less impressive and overwhelming, because we may not explain at all how it works. It is ill for us, if we do not own its sway. For all that life means is bound up with the fact of our obedience to it. Now what we urge is, that the strange mystic instinct in us towards the hope of the immortal life is of the same substance and order with the gravitating force of conscience to whose command we all, at our best and sanest hours, bow.

I have ventured once or twice to use the word "faith." Of course, I had no reference to any dogmatic or sectarian use of the word. I meant that sentiment which, whether men recognize it or not, underlies all positive thought or effort. Strictly speaking, we know nothing: we are experimenters, pioneers, learners, children. We live and move, then, by virtue of our faith or trust in the people about us, in the material that we handle, in the future before us, in the universe that constitutes our home. As a rule

and on the whole, that which we see or know or learn gives us confidence in what lies beyond, around, and before us.

Thus we believe in matter and the atoms of which it is composed. No one knows just what matter is. No one has seen an atom of it. But we believe or trust it. Handle it, study it, use it, obey its conditions, and it will react kindly toward us; it will serve and obey us; it will do us good, and not evil; it will tell us the truth about itself. This is our faith,—the faith of science. It is not blind faith, indeed, but it is a sentiment, like all the other sentiments, impossible altogether to define, explain, or measure. Our feeling or sentiment is that the universe is right, is veracious, is significant, is good to live in. It is allied to all our sentiments, and is of the nature of religion. Our working value as efficient and practical men is more or less according to the strength of this sentiment. To have it in abundance is intellectual health and sanity.

Here, now, are certain great but actual elements that constitute man's life, just so far as it is a man's life, and not merely animal. These elements, all akin and interwoven, are love, honor, truth, duty or conscience, faith. Hope is only another of these items of life. They are all as invisible as the strange atoms of which we glibly talk. There is also a truly infinite element in every one of them. Love or honor, or loyalty to truth and duty, must go beyond all cost and measure, or else it is not genuine. Imagine the love of a mother or a patriot that only goes up to a certain defined measure of sacrifice and then stops short. Imagine Mr. Darwin following truth only so far as it is popular, and then renouncing his quest. Imagine any honest man to become purchasable, at however vast a price. The

wonder of these vital elements of life is that they transcend all measures. Hope also behaves the same. Bound it by the term of a single life or by the atmosphere of this world or by any limit beyond which it must not go, and hope, like love or duty, being thus cut off from the infinite ranges, ceases or dies.

You will indeed sometimes find those who seem to deny what they call "personal immortality." But these very persons are likely immediately, as George Eliot did, to assume the same vital reality, under cover of the "immortality of influence" or goodness or the immortal life of the human race. As if here were not the same mystery of unceasing life as before! As if influence and goodness could be "immortal" at all, unless in persons also immortal! As if the limit of hope to the finite life of this planet, though it should last through a million generations of noble lives, were not in the end the same death-blow to hope as the limitation of a person to this earthly lifetime is! The truth is that faith, hope, love (the most substantial elements that make us what we are), can never brook any question of their own, and therefore of our, essential significance and reality.

I suppose that we touch at this point upon what Theodore Parker and others have called their "intuition" or certainty of the immortal life. The name is not important: the word "intuition" causes obvious objections. We wish to be very modest in claiming a species of certainty that others do not share. But it is in the nature of all of us to believe in truth, honor, justice, love, as deathless facts. Their realm, we say, is immortal. Now we, at our best, belong in this realm, and these items of life constitute our best selves.

There is a process of thought here, like what we

follow in asserting our food values. It is possible to set up doubts of the efficacy or the need of foods, and certainly of particular kinds of food. Sanguine people might assure us that we may get such command of our bodies as some time to outgrow the need of food. We may even try sceptical experiments in cutting off various elements of diet. We cannot tell just what food does to nourish us. Nevertheless, there is an incurable appetite and instinct in us for the simple elements that constitute our food. We leave out the nitrogen or the carbon, or the tiny trace of iron or lime to our peril. Anæmia, disease, death, presently threatens us.

So with the elements that make man's life most characteristically human. You can doubt one or another of them, and experiment and play with them, but every one of them immediately reasserts itself. You leave out any one of them at your peril. You leave hope out at the loss of fulness of life. You cut hope down from its normal hold on the infinite, and force it into mortal limits, whether threescore years or millions of years, and you have cut at the source of life itself. You cannot breathe as well. The power, the joy, the significance, which belongs to normal life, drops away. You have worked the same injury to human life in setting a limit to hope as you would work in setting a limit beyond which the conscience or the love may not act. We urge that this is an extremely interesting fact, of which every one has to take account.

We turn now to another class of facts. Multitudes of people tell us that they hope for the immortal life on the ground of an event in the history of Palestine nearly two thousand years ago. We venture to set this aside.

However important it may seem to others, it does not now concern us. It would raise controversy to use it. What we wish to press, however, is the indisputable fact, about which all the resurrection stories centre, of a very illustrious and beautiful human life. The man who taught the beatitudes and loved and consorted with all kinds and conditions of men, and finally died forgiving his enemies, arrests the attention of the world. Why? Because, as all the world believes, he lived the kind of life which every one ought to live. Here was a normal man, true-hearted, faithful, outspoken, fearless, altogether humane and companionable. Here was a man who lived as any one and every one would live who really believes this to be God's world, or a universe. He lived by the rules and in the terms of what we call the "immortal life." Thus love, honor, faith, conscience, truth, hope, described this man's essential nature, as color, weight, specific gravity, crystallization, describe a gem. Let us try to understand what the fact of this one life signifies.

It had been open to wonder what this world was for, where it came from, what message it had (if any at all) for its inhabitants. It had been a changing, developing universe through an unknown time. Brute force had seemed to play through it. Pain and sorrows and physical death were in it. Beauty and gleams of intelligence were also in it, but animalism mostly prevailed. Any visitor here from another star would have fairly asked, On what intelligent lines does all this seeming waste of motion run?

It was as if some one had come for a day to look on at the clearing of a vast tropical plantation. He would see piles of earth and clumsy machinery and the toil of men and animals, and vast cost, and little besides,—

no flower gardens, no fruit, no settled homes, but only a chaos of the long preliminary processes through which a plantation in the wilderness is reduced to order.

Let our stranger now come later and look again. Amidst the stumps of the ancient trees on the edge of the forest they have put out a thin line of plants, oranges it may be, bananas, or pineapples. Observe attentively, and you will find somewhere a single ripened fruit hidden among the leaves. Taste this fruit, and now you know what the plantation is for: you do not need to go and ask the master proprietor what he is about or why he put out so great an expense. The sight and the taste of that one fruit are his answer and his justification for the toil of his men.

So, when you once set your eyes on the acknowledged facts of Jesus' life, you have the answer of the spirit of the universe to the age-long question: What is this world for? It is as if God had spoken aloud. This kind of fruitage is worth the infinite cost of the world. All the meaning of the ages of the slow evolution is concentrated here in this single specimen of the ripened fruit. Such is the mighty doctrine of evolution, translated into the terms of religion. Nothing less than the terms of religion will meet or describe the nature of the facts.

We have said that the mystery of the world is resolved as soon as we see one face that bears what we call "the smile of God," as soon as we hear one voice that cries cheerfully, "The Lord reigneth," or, "All is well." To see the perfect fruit of goodness in a noble man's life is an answer, as long as we see it, to all our distressed questions about the purpose and design of the world. Deathless hope is in this man's face.

Hope springs in us at every word of such a man's voice. Why? Because our highest intelligence is satisfied with this answer, and with nothing less. Do you still ask, Why? We cannot explain the fact any more than we can explain why we are moved and rested and satisfied with certain music. We are musical by nature. So, as some one has said of man, we are by nature "incurably religious."

There is not, however, one good life only, or one great voice, or one face of a godlike man. We cannot say when—long before Jesus came—the fruitage began to show here and there on the wonderful tree of life. Wherever such faces appeared, with the light of love in them, whenever such voices of courage and hope were heard, men were irresistibly moved and swayed to believe in a righteous world; that is, to have faith in God. Wherever the good fruit of the universe showed itself, men hoped the more. And their hope became finer and worthier.

Moreover, as the ages roll on, we see no longer single and rare specimens of the good fruitage of the world, but whole clusters, more or less ripened. Groups, communities, villages, nations, become touched by the increasing warmth and light. There is not a village, or hardly a neighborhood, in which we cannot point to one or another true-hearted man or sweet-natured woman, hidden it may be in modest obscurity, who bears the same kind of witness to a spiritual purpose in the universe which Jesus bore on the larger scale of history. If all men were like this man, we say, all men would be immortal and fearless. If the world moves to give us fruitage like this, everything that has ever happened in the toilsome, costly processes seems now to be justified. It is a wonderful world, no doubt, thus

to create men, after the fashion of sons of God. It does create such men. If it ripens us into such men, it is enough. Their unfailing characteristic is faith, love, and hope.

Neither do we have to wait till we find fully grown and all-round men. Gleams of color and hope shine daily out of the ordinary human life, wherever you watch people. Heroes of the storm, life-savers on our coasts, rude sailors venturing everything for the sake of their comrades; heroes of the shop and the forge and the railway engine, standing at their posts in unseen peril or wreck; nurses and physicians in hospital wards, brave children, patient mothers,—show us continually the eternal lines on which somehow human character is made to grow. Blossoms of beauty everywhere presage the coming of new harvests of the indestructible life of God, coming to birth in the souls of men.

This is not to deny that there is another aspect of life which often distresses us. We may sway in our moods from hope to grief and back again. It is well for us to be modest in our hope, lest we merely hope, and do nothing efficient to make our hope real. The figure of the new plantation serves us again. We look away from the fruit, and straightway we see the cost of toil needful yet before the plantation will bear continuous fruitage. We sway in our feelings between a law of effort and the law of satisfaction, as we sway between hunger and sufficiency of food.

A constant series of personal experiments goes on, both positive and negative. We try to live as if the good life were alone real, and as if the great spiritual values of justice, love, and fidelity, were the only lasting values. We find that, living thus, we are always at

our best. We have rest and power on this side. The common life is filled with new meanings. We fall away and try the opposite or negative course. We let material values choke our souls; we are buried in clouds of fear and doubt. Life and even the physical health droop. We cease to be fully men. We lose clearness of intellectual vision. Human life is not normal on the side of the darkness. It becomes normal at once, as soon as we return to the attitude of those who trust, love, and hope.

"Be practical: use your intelligence," men often cry. And we reply: This is just what we are doing. The ideal things are the most practical. There is nothing so real, forceful, efficient, as faith in God and a good hope are.

The authority that we seek for the hope of immortality is cumulative. We hear at first only a few voices. Then we hear other voices, as it were singing to us. Then we try our own voices,—we who had thought that we could not sing, who had had no use for music. And, lo! it proves that singing is one of the great natural functions of life; it expresses life; it deepens life. To sing is human: to forego singing is to be less human. To learn to sing is to learn to live more richly; it is not only to enjoy more, it is also to accomplish more. Witness the sailors as they heave anchor together.

So in this high realm of the spiritual realities. To sing with those who love and hope is doubtless fuller and therefore truer or more real life. Not to sing is to lose in life. And life, by some irresistible instinct in us, is what we are made to seek.

And now at last a mighty chorus of voices seems to surround us and bear us up with them in their

song. The clear notes of the master singers and poets lead them. The multitude of the brave and true are with them. The sweetest souls we ever knew are among them. They sing ever a song of unconquerable hope. How can we have the hearts of men and not take up the music of this song!

SMOKE AND THE FLAME, THE

A Study in the Development of Religion. By Charles F. Dole

Size, 4 3-4 x 7 inches; pages, 230; price, 80 cents *net;* postage, 7 cents.

THE suggestive title of this book originates in the author's happy illustration of the undeveloped religious ideas of the early ages of the Christian era as the green fuel which gave rise to the dense theological smoke preceding the purer flame of higher and truer spiritual ideals. The gradually dawning modern conception of God and nature and man is seen to be "the slow coming to consciousness of the divine ideal of humanity when the life of the spirit submerges old theological barriers in its interest for goodness, brotherhood, and mutual helpfulness." The process and the progress of this growth in religious life and thought are traced step by step in the slow change of centuries from the old religion to the new. "The history of religion," as is well said in the introduction, "has been a wonderful development, like the history of art, of science, of government. We cannot understand the religion of our own time, much less know what we ought practically to do with it, and to which side, party, or church we belong, unless we know something of the long world-processes through which religion has passed into its various modern forms."

SERMONS

By James Walker

Size, 5 1-2 x 7 1-2; pages, 850; price, $1.00 *net;* postage, 19 cents.

THESE sermons were for the most part delivered in the college chapel to the students of Harvard University. A man of keen intellectual powers and great strength of character, Dr. Walker preached with deep conviction and abounding sympathy. Clearness of thought, force of logic, attractiveness of rhetoric, richness of diction, were all combined for the purpose of making plain his convictions of right and duty.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

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FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the sum of .....dollars.

CHURCH GOING

An Address

at the

Bi-Centennial of the First Parish in Framingham

by

Hon. GEORGE F. HOAR

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

CHURCH GOING.

I WAS brought up strictly, by good, old-fashioned Puritan parents. I committed to memory the Ten Commandments and the sum of the Ten Commandments in my youth. But perhaps the strictest of all the commandments, enforced by the severest penalties, was that I should not make a noise in meeting. Now, here I am, in my old age, summoned by your good pastor to violate that strictest commandment of my childhood, and to make a noise, not only in the meeting-house, but in the pulpit.

You are celebrating the foundation of a New England parish. It is one of the simplest, yet one of the most important and interesting organizations known on earth. In the beginning, the town and the parish were identical. Every freeman must be a church member. Religion and public life were near akin. The town called the minister, and the church members conducted the town meeting. Our ancestors, when they settled a new town, set apart a tract of land for a training-field close by the church. The Old Common, as we now call these training-fields, is found at the centre of every old town, and it is found here. But, after all, the real training-field was in the meeting-house, indoors. These meeting-houses, with their simple architecture, were the great power-houses from which went forth the spiritual and moral influences

which inspired and controlled the whole life of the people.

This form of government, the Parish and the Town, is the simplest and cheapest known among men. And yet it has been almost the most permanent. Our oldest Middlesex towns will be celebrating their three hundredth anniversaries before the hair begins to grow gray on the temples of the youths in this audience.

Since your first settlers cleared these fields and gathered this church here, the map of Europe has been many times changed. Stuart and Orange and Hanover have sat in succession on the throne of Great Britain. England has united with herself Ireland and Scotland, conquered Canada, settled Australia, subjected three hundred million Asiatics to her will, and established her dominion in Africa. France has been twice a Republic, twice an Empire, a Monarchy again, and now, the third time, a Republic. Belgium and Holland have been joined and severed. The star of Poland has disappeared from the sky. Italy, after many throes and convulsions, has shaken the armed heel of Austria from off her neck, has banished the Bourbons, and overthrown the temporal power of the pope. Hapsburgh, Bourbon, Bonaparte, Savoy, the short-lived Republic, and now, Bourbon again, have successively held dominion in Spain. Germany has built up her mighty empire from sixty petty states. Yet during all this time, the town and parish abide, as your fathers founded them. The simple and cheap mechanism, of which no man knows the contriver, has, without substantial change, performed perfectly all the chief functions of government, in simple, democratic majesty.

Your wooden meeting-houses could have been built almost for the cost of a single carving in the stately choir of many a church or cathedral in England or on the Continent. But they have taught their congregations quite as well the relation of man to his Creator, and much better his duty to his fellow-men and to the State.

The town as a dominant political organization seems to be losing its pre-eminence. Massachusetts is already largely a cluster of cities. In the great towns the old civic equality and the simple town meeting government are departing. Men are leaving the farms and the fields for the compact centres of population. The ways of the city prevail over the fashion of the countrymen. But the school and the parish, which in their simplicity have, as I just now said, outlasted many thrones and kingdoms, I hope are to remain.

> . . . . "What is excellent,
> As God lives, is permanent."

For a century to come, the children shall gather in the school-house, to learn together as equals the lessons of Freedom and of Virtue and of Self-government; and the worship of pure hearts, uttered by free lips, shall rise from these Christian altars to the imperishable Heavens.

Does any man doubt that it is desirable to maintain the public worship of God? Is there any man who would abolish the Christian Church, whatever may be his own spiritual condition, or whether he may like better for himself to spend Sunday in solitary communion with Nature or with books? But, if these Christian institutions are to abide, the men who believe

in them must maintain them. The men who need public and social worship will never, as a rule, seek it unless the men who think they do not need it set the example, and join in it. There is, in my judgment, no more commanding public duty than attendance at church on a Sunday. The greater the man's influence, the more sufficient he may be to himself, the greater and more imperative the duty. I do not believe there ever was a man who attended church constantly through life, or who brought his children to church in their youth, or who was taken by his parents to church in his own youth, who ever regretted it as he looked back.

The effect on the man himself of giving one day in the week, or certainly a large part of one day in the week, to rest from secular labors and cares, if it were only to lay down for one day the burden of the other six, to shut out for one day the anxiety and worry of business or politics, would of itself, in my judgment, repay all its costs. Let there be one place and one hour devoted to quiet, from which the world is shut out, as it is shut out in a long voyage at sea.

"O Father, though the anxious fear
May cloud to-morrow's way,
Nor fear nor doubt shall enter here,
All shall be thine to-day.

"Sleep, sleep, to-day, tormenting cares,
Of earth and folly born,
You shall not dim the light that streams
From this Celestial morn.

"To-morrow will be time enough
To feel your harsh control.
You shall not violate this day,
The Sabbath of the soul."

I put this on the ground, not that we are to gather as subjects to honor our King, nor as slaves to abase ourselves before our owner. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. I put it solely on the ground of the advantage, of the necessity, to you and me. I believe we best maintain the country we love and the State of which we are a part, and of whose government we have our share of personal responsibility, by a constant attendance on the public and social worship of God. I believe it to be the interest of the country, of the town, and of the individual soul that the habit be not abandoned.

I think if it were to be put upon the ground alone of personal advantage, as a matter of mere intellectual and literary training, your young men will find it clearly for their interest to be constant attendants here.

I know the temptations on a summer's day to get into the country, among fields and forests, and, to use a familiar phrase, to stretch your legs by a walk, or a ride on a bicycle. But whether it be better to do it may possibly depend on the question whether the legs or the soul be the most important part of a man.

I believe that as a matter of literary and intellectual training, to listen to a chapter of the Scriptures, which, besides all else they are, are the best example of English style in all literature, to accustom the spiritual ear to the sublime utterance of Doddridge, to the lofty organ-tone of Watts, to the sweet charm of Wesley, to listen to a discussion of the things that be of the spirit, even from a minister of ordinary capacity, is the best thing that can be done, for at least an hour or two of this day of rest.

I do not put it upon the ground of an express divine

command. I do not enter upon a discussion here whether the Fourth Commandment was of divine origin, whether it was intended for the Jews only, or whether the injunction to keep holy the seventh day of the week can properly be transferred to the first. I put it solely on the ground of good citizenship, and on the ground that attending church from Sunday to Sunday, and joining with neighbors in the public worship of God, and in the discussions and meditation of the things that be of the spirit, is of incalculable value to man himself.

I suppose there are very few persons among those who do not go to church themselves who would not regard it as a grievous public calamity if all our churches were closed, and the public worship of God and the preaching of the gospel were discontinued. It would, in my judgment, if that were to happen, be impossible to maintain liberty, self-government, or any form of Republic which depends for its success on the character of its citizenship. That men in general think so is shown by the fact that so many persons contribute to the support of parishes, who seldom or never attend church themselves. When practising law, I could see the effect on the citizenship of a town of the long pastorate of a good minister. There are towns—of which your neighboring Northborough, under the pastoral care of Dr. Allen, was an example; of which my native town of Concord, under Dr. Ripley, was an example—which always furnished excellent men for the jury-box, excellent men for the legislature; where the witnesses could be believed; where they had few angry or disgraceful lawsuits. You could always trace the character and quality of the people to the

habit of attending upon the ministrations of a man, not always a man of great genius, but always of pure and lofty character. The public worship of God in this country is to be continued or maintained only by attendance upon it.

I would like to say a word on a kindred subject, now attracting much attention. How far is it right to retain our Sunday laws? What is the true principle on which they are to be defended, if they can be defended? This is a matter which it seems to me is much misunderstood.

I do not believe there is any considerable number of people who would revive or would maintain any law to compel men to any religious observance. That is for the individual conscience. The State is separated, I hope and believe, forever from the Church. The State can do nothing for the Church except to secure her rights of property, and to secure her from any interference in the exercise of her legitimate functions. The Church as a corporate body has her rights to her property, as secular corporations have theirs. The right of the people peaceably to assemble is as sacred, and no more sacred, when they assemble for worship or to take counsel in spiritual affairs, as when they come together for political or social ends. The State must see that neither the Church nor her disciples are molested in worshipping God after their own way.

We have the right to secure decency in dealing with religious matters, as we have a right to secure it—a right not exercised much in this country—in the discussion of other matters. We have a right to punish blasphemy or profaneness which shocks mankind, as we have the right to punish common scolds or common

railers and brawlers. But we cannot undertake to use the State as a religious instrument. The secular power is no longer a weapon for the ecclesiastical. We can constrain no man to religious opinions, and we can compel no man to any religious observance which his own conscience does not require of him.

There are Sabbatarians who think that the Fourth Commandment requires a strict observance of the Sabbath as a religious obligation. There are others who think that commandment for the Jews only. There are others who think the commandment is for the seventh day of the week, and that it is without obligation as affecting the first day of the week. We have, within the hospitable doors of our Commonwealth, Catholics and Protestants, Jews and Christians, Asiatics and Africans, Pagans and Hindus, Agnostics and Atheists, all equal before the Law, and equally entitled to act as their consciences shall dictate, or indeed to refuse to act if their consciences so dictate, in religious matters, so they do not interfere with the rights of other men. None of these can use the law as an instrument. So, if the law is to prohibit secular business on Sunday, it must be for some other reason than because we claim the right to enact or to reenforce the law of God.

But we have a right to establish holidays, and to secure them against disturbance. We have the right to limit the hours of labor. And we have the right to secure our dwellings against disturbing noises in the street or on other men's premises. We have the right to secure the quiet of the night. Nobody questions the lawfulness of this exercise of power by the State, and nobody deems it an undue restraint of individual conscience or individual liberty.

Now the Sunday laws must rest on this principle, if at all. If in any particular they go beyond it, they are, so far, I think, illogical, and should be amended to conform to it.

Experience has convinced a majority of our people that a rest from labor of one day in seven is not only desirable, but essential for the mental and bodily health of men and women in general. A great many persons think that that day of rest ought to be devoted to a consideration of spiritual interests, of the relation of man to his Creator and the hopes of a future state, to the religious training of the young and the religious improvement of persons of mature age. The State has the right, I think, to secure this period of rest by law. There is the same right to do it that there is to secure the quiet of the night. Whether the curfew law be wise or unwise, I suppose no man would claim that such a law would be tyranny.

Now, to secure the opportunity for that large proportion of the people who desire to devote one day in seven to rest, to religious study and meditation, or religious instruction of their children, it is not enough to enact that they shall not be disturbed in their houses or their churches. If business be permitted to go on as usual, if the factories and shops may be opened, if teams are to go along the streets, and every kind of secular business may proceed at the will of the individual, it will be impossible for those who want the religious holiday to get it.

The right to prevent this rests on the same right as the laws which prohibit men, women, and children in factories from working more than a certain number of hours in the week, and requiring fourteen or sixteen

hours of the day to be left free. There are many persons who might be willing to work twelve hours a day or fourteen hours a day, and could do it for considerable periods of time without suffering. But the law prohibits the factory owner from employing the individual operative more than eight or ten hours. This is simply to secure the remainder of the day for rest. Whether it be wise or unwise, no man claims that it is beyond the reasonable power of the State.

Now the law which secures Saturday afternoon to the workman in the factory, may for the same reason secure Sunday to all citizens alike.

I suppose nobody would have deemed it an act of tyranny for the legislative power of the State to require the public to abstain from ordinary secular business on the day of the funeral of Lincoln or Garfield or McKinley. This would not be because the State would claim the right to compel men to profess to reverence the dead President whom they did not reverence, or to pay any hypocritical tribute to his memory. But the right of the citizens in general to pay such a tribute cannot be exercised while secular business is going on, and it is a reasonable use of the authority of the State to require men to desist from ordinary business.

The factory bell and the steam whistle must be silent during the hours of the night. The trade procession or the torchlight procession shall not be allowed to pass my house at midnight. The trip-hammer may properly be compelled to cease its din in the neighboring factory, that my family may sleep. The lot which is vacant next to that whereon I dwell shall not be used by its proprietor for boisterous games

at unreasonable hours. The State has the right to compel its citizens, within reasonable limits, to respect the holidays of a majority of its citizens, and it may require a like respect for the holy days. Whether other men consider their observation a religious duty or not, I consider it a religious duty, and also a necessity of my spiritual, moral, and, indeed, of my physical nature.

I do not, therefore, undertake, in advocating moderate and reasonable Sunday laws, to put any restraint upon the conscience of my neighbor, or to compel him to any religious observance which his own conscience does not demand of him. I do not enter into the question of whether the Fourth Commandment was a divine command at all, whether it was for Jews alone, or whether it relates to the seventh or the first day of the week. I concede that the legislative power in the State has no right to be discussing such questions, or acting upon such reasons. But I think the State may secure for its citizens reasonable periods of rest, and reasonable opportunity for worship, religious meditation, and religious instruction, which, if desired by a large enough body of citizens, may be secure from interruption by the prohibition of secular business.

We get, occasionally, angry, contemptuous, or scornful utterances from persons who fancy that those of us who would maintain this great religious holiday for the people are moved by the same spirit from which came religious tyranny and persecution in old times. They, I think, do not comprehend the spirit of the age or the purpose of the majority of their fellow-citizens.

There are a few survivors of the Dark Ages who witness the cheerful procession of mankind going on

in freedom and in love, as the giants, Pope and Pagan, saw Bunyan's Pilgrim, as he passed by their caverns on his way to the Palace Beautiful. But, in general, the devout and cheerful spirit of religious liberty has possession to-day of the civilized world. Our atheistic and agnostic friends, who are so disturbed when we ask the people to maintain and observe this holiday, confound, as it is quite natural that men who fasten their gaze on the past should confound, the spirit of religion with the spirit of persecution. We, like them, mean to stand fast in our liberty. We believe it is the liberty wherein Christ made us free. When we consecrate Sunday to rest or to worship, we consecrate it also to Christian liberty.

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IMMORTALITY, and Other Essays

By Charles Carroll Everett

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2; pages, 280; price, $1.20 *net;* postage, 11 cents.

THE late Dean of the Harvard Divinity School has given us many scholarly essays on religious and philosophical subjects. Dr. Everett's penetrating and analytical mind, with his ideas expressed in clear and simple yet finished style, lends to all his writings an interest and charm not always associated with the topics discussed. The two previous volumes of his essays have omitted considerable excellent material worthy of a more permanent form of preservation than the periodicals in which it appeared, and it is from this source that the following essays have been chosen for the contents of the present volume: "Immortality," "The Known and the Unknowable in Religion," "Mysticism," "The Gain of History," "The Faith of Science and the Science of Faith," "Joseph Priestley," "The Philosophy of the Sublime," "Spencer's Reconciliation of Science and Religion."

SPARK IN THE CLOD, THE

A Study in Evolution. By J. T. Sunderland

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2 inches; pages, 230; price, 80 cents *net;* postage, 8 cents.

IN this examination into evolutionary processes and the effect of our modern knowledge of them upon our intellectual, moral, and religious conceptions, the author takes us back to the earth's formation, where the order of creation, so far as it is of human concern, begins. Then, after the lapse of ages, man and his evolution become visible parts of this world-process, involving the problems of pain and evil, of God and the soul and immortality. Rational application of accepted facts of science is made to the world of religious ideas, and the necessary modification in the old conceptions of things is clearly pointed out. Finally, regarding human destiny and the hope of immortality, the author reasons from what man has been to what, in the rationality of nature, he must be; for "all evolution is at once a history and a prophecy."

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

[No. 231]

THE FULFILMENT

OF

CITIZENSHIP

BY

TEN LEADERS OF AMERICAN THOUGHT AND LIFE

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

The quotations are taken from the public addresses of the following exemplars of American Citizenship:—

George Frisbie Hoar. (1826–1904.)
Senator from Massachusetts, 1877–1904.

Edward Everett Hale. (1822–)
Author. Chaplain of the United States Senate.

George Dexter Robinson. (1834–1896.)
Governor of Massachusetts, 1884–1887.

Samuel McChord Crothers. (1857–)
Preacher and Essayist.

Carroll Davidson Wright. (1840–)
United States Commissioner of Labor, 1873–1888.
President of Clark College.

David Starr Jordan. (1851–)
President of Leland Stanford Jr. University.

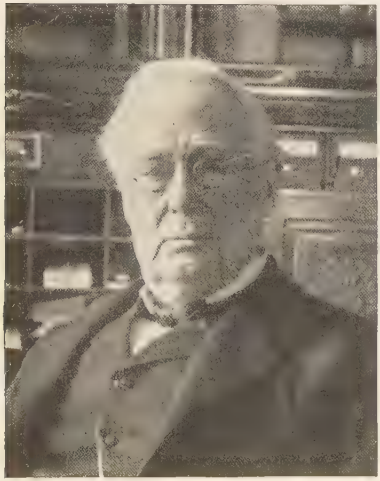
John Davis Long. (1838–)
Governor of Massachusetts, 1880–1883.
Secretary of the Navy, United States, 1897–1902.

Roger Wolcott. (1847–1901.)
Governor of Massachusetts, 1897–1900.

George William Curtis. (1824–1892.)
Author and Publicist

Charles William Eliot. (1834–)
President of Harvard University.

GEORGE F. HOAR



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Does any man doubt that it is desirable to maintain the public worship of God? . . . If these Christian institutions are to abide, the men who believe in them must maintain them. The men who need public and social worship will never, as a rule, seek it unless the men who think they do not need it set the example, and join in it. There is, in my judgment, no more commanding public duty than attendance at church on a Sunday. The greater the man's influence, the more sufficient he may be to himself, the greater and more imperative the duty. . . .

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I suppose there are very few persons among those who do not go to church themselves who would not regard it as a grievous public calamity if all our churches were closed and the public worship of God and the preaching of the gospel were discontinued. It would, in my judgment, if that were to happen, be impossible to maintain liberty, self-government, or any form of Republic which depends for its success on the character of its citizenship. The public worship of God in this country is to be continued or maintained only by attendance upon it.—*Address at the Bicentennial of the First Parish in Framingham, October* 13, 1901.

EDWARD EVERETT HALE

People tell me sometimes that the Puritans' plan is becoming old-fashioned, the plan by which people, who did not choose to tie themselves by any creed, simply agreed to "walk together" in their effort to abate temptation and to keep passion down. And I often hear moral voluptuaries, who expect to please themselves and to escape from temptation at the same moment, who tell me indeed that public worship, the united worship of the church, does not "attract them." They say they prefer to commune with God alone, perhaps by a babbling brook, perhaps in the comforts of a library. I do not see what your preference has to do with it. I never heard that anybody asked what you preferred. I do not know that any one cares. That is not the question. "What does the world need?" That is the question. To that question the answer is that the world needs more union and less separation. It needs more of the "together" and less of the "alone." It needs the unity of the spirit instead of diversity of form. And so the world needs that, like a man,

you bear your brother's burdens, instead of posturing, like a fool, under your own. Let each man apply that rule by giving his countenance, presence, and help in some religious society. And let him give such sympathy really, with his whole heart. Let it come just as you give your attention to the affairs of a bank in which you are a director or of a railway which you have set out to build. Certainly, men are not abandoning the "*together*" in any other sphere of life. Syndicates for good purposes, rings for bad purposes, caucuses for politics, societies for reform, are the special signs of our time. In such a time it is hard to make me believe that the society formed before any of these modern associations, the society called the "Church of Christ," is a mistake, is out of place, or unfit for the time and occasion. And this follows, that everybody not confessedly irreligious must sustain it and carry it forward, unless he accept the heresy of the Roman Catholics, who profess that only the priesthood is the Church, and assign to them the thinking for all mankind. Everybody must help. And this help is not a now and then help, not an occasional attendance on Sunday, when the day is not fine enough for a drive. It is the sort of loyal support which you give to the other institutions which you believe in. . . . I do not ask a man to go regularly to church because it feeds him or clothes him, but because the country —nay, mankind in a thousand necessities—needs public worship. If the man turn on me, if he say, "What good will it do me?" why, I have only to reply, "Dear friend, you cannot help yourself unless it be in your heart first of all to help your fellow-men."—*A Congregational Church. A Sermon.*

GEORGE D. ROBINSON

This Church of ours is an association of persons interested in following the life and example of Christ; who believe in the essential worth and dignity of human life and character; who know that it is better for them as individuals, for them in little groups as families, and in the greater assemblages, as towns, cities, and States, that men and women shall be clean and honest and pure and Christian and uplifting. The Church stands for and works for that. The preacher, the pastor, is for the time the leader, it may be. But never should there be space between the leader and the follower. Close up the ranks! . . .

In the little observation I have had in the world as a church-going boy and man, I am filled with admiration of the devotion and the ability manifested by the clergy. Look you down the length of your lives over the men you have known in that high calling, and answer this question, whether the service that has been proffered has not been of the highest nature, of the purest application, of the most

sacred character. How near he has come to us all in times of the tenderest emotion, of the most touching bereavement, of the most delightful joys! And where is the home in civilized land that has not felt the benignance of the assistance that has come from these devoted men? They are not leaders, you say! Who led the sentiment for liberty in this country before the shots were fired at Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill? Who spoke but the men from the pulpits? Who breathed again the tones of liberty and equality in the later day but men who devoted their lives to the development of the highest in human character? Does any congregation in Massachusetts seek to lead a group toward temperance, and find the ministry pulling the other way? If so, where? Have we all, as members of church assemblies, been doing our utmost to uplift, elevate, and purify our fellow-men, and found the clergymen trying to degrade and destroy them? . . .

What the preachers want, and what the Church demands, is the presence and active co-operation of the laity. In the consciousness that it is our church and not theirs, that we are to have the whole benefit of it, a duty belongs to us. Paying is not the whole, however liberal the contribution. We must have the dollars, but we want the persons; and we must have co-operation. There is many a minister that, with all his attempts at economy and all his striving to get along with what he has, would find himself endowed with greater strength and a keener enthusiasm if his whole people came Sunday after Sunday and met him, feeling that they were the church, and not he alone; that it stands for something more than a mere abstraction; that it is vitalized in human beings to whom he speaks and to whom he appeals in earnest enthusiasm. . . .—*Address at the Annual Meeting of the American Unitarian Association*, 1885.

SAMUEL M. CROTHERS

There are many who believe in religion who do not believe in religious institutions or in those agencies by which religion has heretofore been propagated. The Church, they say, represents only one stage in religious development. It is the logical expression of the idea of the monopoly of spiritual grace by a divinely organized corporation. . . . But the tendency of liberal thought is to destroy this ecclesiastical monopoly. . . . When we come to see the religious significance of universal truths and broadly human experiences, we perceive that the old claims of the church must fall to the ground. What, then, becomes of the Church, when it no longer is thought of as a storehouse of magical grace? . . .

I think that the question whether the Church has any longer a useful function depends on a consideration that has nothing to do with the old ecclesiastical pretensions. Let us turn away from these pretensions altogether. Let us face the future, and look at the free and generous ideals which command the allegiance of the modern man. This

man is not asking how he may flee from the wrath of an angry God, he is not intent on understanding the niceties of any theological scheme. It may be that in regard to these things he is profoundly sceptical, and he turns away from the churches where they are taught.

Yet there are some things he does believe in, and his faith is real though it may be slow in taking form. . . . He believes in humanity and in the moral relations between his life and the lives of others He believes that he has within himself powers to be developed for noble uses. He believes in nature, in reason, in conscience. . . . How are these great ideals of his to be most worthily fulfilled? Can they be best fulfilled in sullen solitude, while the believer shuns his fellows that he may work out his own salvation, or do they require for their development the contact with other minds and the co-operation of other wills? I believe that is a question that is answered in the very asking. The modern ideal of religion is pre-eminently a social ideal, and it must express itself in some social way. It inspires to united effort, and does not drive the individual into selfish isolation. . . . One cannot excuse himself for his lack of co-operation by saying that he is cultivating the virtues which belong to his own character. There are virtues which flourish only in the genial atmosphere of human fellowship. . . . This fellowship must be freer than that of the church in the past, but it must not be less real. If we believe in the revelation of divine truth, through nature and through the soul, we will seek out our fellow-believers. As we unite for a common work, we are strengthened and inspired, "each of us by the other's faith."—*Does the Modern Man need a Church?* (*a Sermon*).

CARROLL D. WRIGHT

I cannot assent to the suggestion that there is any decadence or lessening of a true religious spirit, taking our community as a whole. . . . The influence of the Church must be acknowledged, whether people attend it in as large numbers as formerly or not. . . .

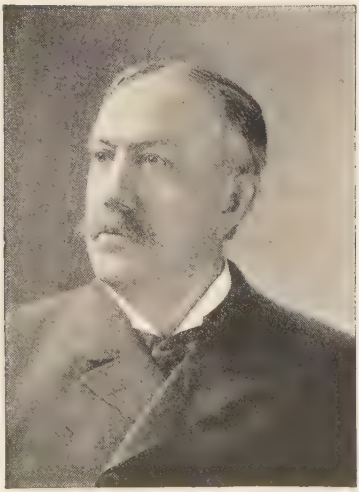
The public conscience to-day is more acute, more sensitive, than at any time in the history of mankind. We see the evidence of the truth of my assertion in the question of crime. . . . This new conscience is constantly elevating misdemeanors that were offences against individual conscience into offences against the public conscience, and making them punishable as crimes. . . . If the public conscience had not been stimulated by high religious conception of the rights of the community and of the development of the individual, this state of affairs would not have occurred. . . . The treatment of the labor question offers the strongest evidence of the growth of a religious spirit. . . . The best men are willing to grant to other men what they claim for themselves; and

this is one of the highest conceptions of religious action. . . . There is a new patriotism,—that patriotism which is born of a religious spirit. It is devotion to a high principle. It is a patriotism which means personal sacrifice in social service. It is a higher type of patriotism than that exemplified on the battlefield. . . .

The Church has done all this; and, when I say the Church, I mean all churches,—I mean religious teaching, the constant enunciation of the highest principles relating to human conduct, the endeavor of pulpits everywhere to impress upon the people the necessity (not through a system of rewards and punishments, but in order to secure the best results and the surest happiness) of dealing with all questions on a broad, tolerant basis, accepting the precepts of Christ and his teaching as the surest guides by which to mould not only individual but public conduct.

The modern Church may fail to reach as many people, relatively, through its direct ministrations as of old; but it is reaching them in another way. It is reaching them by the preaching of a sane doctrine, which means the upbuilding of the character of men and of the character of community. It is teaching us to recognize the rights and the wrongs that surround us. It is teaching us to be more active in our endeavor to suppress or to right wrong, and in all ways to bring about the establishment of a saner and better community spirit. This does not come from the crucified Christ, nor the dead Christ, nor the Christ of the resurrection, but from the living, active Christ, that always was, is, and always shall be; and it is through this living Christ that we find the solution of all social, industrial, and political problems.—*Address at the National Unitarian Conference*, 1903.

DAVID STARR JORDAN



Some say idly that religion is losing her hold in these strenuous days. But she is not. She is simply changing her grip. The religion of this century will be more practical, more real. It will deal with the days of the week as well as with the Sabbath. It will be as patent in the marts of trade as in the walls of a cathedral, for a man's religion is his working hypothesis of life, not of life in some future world, but of life right here to-day, the only day we have in which to build a life. It will not look backward exclusively to "a dead fact stranded on the shore of the oblivious years," nor will its rewards be found alone in the life to come. The world of to-day will not be a "vale of tears" through which sinful men are to walk unhappily toward final reward. It will be a world of light and color and joy, a world in which each of us may have a noble though a humble part,—the work of the "holy life of action." It will find religion in love and wisdom and virtue, not in bloodless asceticism, philosophical disputation, the maintenance of withered creeds, the culti-

vation of fruitless emotion, or the recrudescence of forms from which the life has gone out. It is possible, Thoreau tells us, for us to "walk in hallowed cathedrals," and this in our every-day lives of profession or trade. It is the loyalty to duty, the love of God through the love of men, which may transform the workshop to a cathedral, and the life of to-day may be divine none the less because it is strenuous and complex. It may be all the more so because it is democratic, even the Sabbath and its duties being no longer exalted above the other holy days. . . .

Those who control the spiritual thought of the twentieth century will be religious men. They will not be religious in the fashion of monks, ascetics, mystic dreamers, or emotional enthusiasts. They will not be active in debating societies, discussing the intricacies of creeds. Neither will they be sticklers as to details in religious millinery. They will be simple, earnest, God-fearing, because they have known the God that makes for righteousness. Their religion of the twentieth will be its working theory of life. It will be expressed in simple terms or it may not be expressed at all, but it will be deep graven in the heart. In wise and helpful life it will find ample justification. It will deal with the world as it is in the service of "the God of Things as They Are." It will find this world not "a vale of tears," a sink of iniquity, but a working paradise in which the rewards of right-doing are instant and constant. It will find, indeed, that "His service is perfect freedom," for all things large or small within the reach of human effort are done in His way, and in His way only.—*The Call of the Twentieth Century.*

JOHN D. LONG

The mission of our liberal faith has always been not so much to the ignorance of remote heathen as to intelligence and common sense and spiritual attainment. . . . For a century, more or less it has been a very ploughshare in the hard and bitter soil of a severe theology, which hid the smiles of a tender Father always behind the frown of an offended and averted Deity; which robbed human nature of its worth and dignity, and which substituted the skeleton of a technical and complicated scheme of injustice for the warm life of the domesticity of man with God. It has let in on all this sunlight and gladness and cheer. It has mellowed even the shadow of death with the tints of a golden sunset of promise. It has left its imprint not more in its own ranks than in ranks outside its own. Its results are hardly more Channing and Hale and Clarke than Brooks and Gordon. Its influence is not more patent in the fruitful graft of the Methodist Robert Collyer than in the earnest work of the revivalist Moody, who seems almost of another faith than that of the

revivalists of fifty years ago. I want no more generous and comfortable atmosphere than pervades the churches of so many of our neighbors, who differ from us to-day less in spirit than in name. . . .

It has been a good work,—that of our liberal faith in this direction; and maybe, in this direction its most effective labor is done. . . . Its crusade against narrowness of dogma over, the better and endless work of being a live, vitalizing, inspiring, practical, constant, permeating spring and flow of Christian character and love and faith in the world should absorb its endeavors. Science, scholarship, brains, will take care of the letter and the doctrine: let us have now the full measure of the spirit and the life. Let us preach the sweetness of faith and duty, more of the soul of Jesus, more of the spiritual exaltation that lift the conduct, the thought, the hope, the act. . . . Would that the hearts of men and women might be touched, their lives guided, so that Christian civilization should be not the husk of a euphonism, but the full corn in the ear of Christian living; and that we could feel assured that *our* faith were indeed making us better and holier; moulding our relations, guiding our walk; entering into our business, and even our politics; directing our education; reforming our reforms, enlightening our treatment of the criminal; attacking our intemperance; sanctifying and spiritualizing our ambitions; making our religion not a form, a habit, a convenience, but something bountiful and large and immanent; making our churches places of worship, and training us, through Christ's sweet example, into loving, trusting, obedient, and pious children of God,—blessed, because gentle in spirit; meek; hungering and thirsting after righteousness; merciful; pure in heart; peace-makers; and persecuted, if at all, for righteousness' sake.

ROGER WOLCOTT

Unitarians concern themselves but little with the puzzling problems of dogmatic theology. They care little for articles definite or indefinite, in which the attempt is made to embody a general belief. They are not even very busy in striving to fit themselves for another world. I believe that their first concern is to try to make better the world in which they now live. Nor are we concerned very much with that old dogma concerning the salvation of our individual souls. We believe, thank God, that in the ripeness of time—perhaps through suffering, perhaps through years or centuries or æons of delay—all souls ultimately will be saved by a merciful and loving Father. And so we recognize that our religion rests not on dogma or creed. We recognize that true religion is a fair blossom that blooms in the heart of him who strives to pattern his life on the teachings and on the life of Jesus Christ. We recognize all who strive humbly to follow in his footsteps. . . We know that as good a Christian as stands in the pulpit or sits in the pew visits, as

the loving physician, the bed of suffering. We know that he who strives in the court of justice to lay down the rules of everlasting right that shall regulate the conduct of man and man, that the citizen who gives loyal service to the State, that all men inspired with like purpose, are good Christians.

Now, in the teachings of the pulpit, I am glad to acknowledge that that truth is never lost sight of. I bid you, gentlemen of the profession of Christ, never to forget that good citizenship is good Christianity. Never let your thoughts, however profound, or your logic, however subtle, wander away from that faith that he who serves his country or his community or his generation honorably and well serves also his God.

It was my pleasure yesterday to bear some part in a service that commemorated a significant event. I need not tell you that I refer to the restoration to this Commonwealth and to her guardianship of that precious relic in which is set forth the story of the Plymouth plantation. There one may read the story, simply and yet eloquently told, of the marvellous foundation of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I think that as citizens of this Commonwealth we owe a debt of gratitude to those who have sent back to us a relic that quickens true patriotism and that teaches the lesson of what men may endure and bear and do in the name of God and religion. To the men and women of this Unitarian denomination the Commonwealth is under a great obligation. From your ranks have come noble types of the true Christian, of the loyal citizen. The Commonwealth acknowledges its debt. It looks forward through all the years that may come to the same accessions from your ranks of loyal men and women, good American citizens.—*Address at the Unitarian Festival, May* 27, 1897.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

It is our time that seems first to have heard, first to have truly comprehended, those great and enduring words: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Cure the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." This is the humanizing, the liberalizing Christ; and he touches with the same benignity our political thought, our forms of government, every form of social action. He compels the acknowledgment of the equality of right. He founds government upon the consent of the governed, until at last the Puritans fleeing from one spiritual despotism to establish another, discover that they cannot flee from their own most essential principle of liberty. . . .

This spirit, organized into a religious denomination, makes the Unitarian denomination, as we know it, the Liberal Christian Church. . . .

The great service of Unitarianism in this country is that it has insisted from first to last upon the identity of Christianity and goodness. There is not a religious and Christian

goodness, and an irreligious and unchristian goodness. The better the man, the better the Christian. Goodness and sanctity are identical. . . . We march on, indeed, to tremendous issues. Great wrongs are to be righted, great abuses to be corrected, great problems solved; and no man can say, readily or definitely, what the remedy shall be. Already we see the vast and overwhelming aggregation and concentration of wealth, paralyzing rivalry, benumbing individual enterprise. We are proud of our universal education, teaching the great multitude of men their overwhelming power; and of our universal suffrage, giving to the multitude of men authority to make their will law and authority to enforce the law. We see all forms of socialism, from the nationalization of the land to the nationalization of every comfort and every necessity of life. These are the thunder-heads that are rising everywhere above our horizon. Do you see as distinctly the Franklin who holds in his hand the master key that shall draw their lightnings harmless to the ground? I do not believe that key is to be found in science alone, with its utmost resources; nor in mechanical inventions only, wonderfully exquisite as they are; nor in the shrewdness of political economy, acute as it may be. These are all weapons to be used; and the hand that shall hold this master key is Christ, as the modern mind conceives him,—Christ healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, casting out devils from society and business, from politics and religion; Christ, the friend of Lazarus and of Mary Magdalen; Christ robed in absolute justice and also in transcendent love, and embracing the whole world. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden," is still the evangel of the world's salvation.—*Address at the National Unitarian Conference*, 1889.

CHARLES W. ELIOT

Some people think that the president of a college has a monotonous life, filled with routine work of a somewhat trivial sort. To be sure, he sees a steady stream of interesting youth flowing by him. But it is commonly believed that he must be somewhat of a recluse; that his experience in the world and his observation of men and women must be somewhat narrow. This is not the case at Harvard University. The contact with men and women is very large. It comes through the University teachers, the students, the friends and parents of the students, and the graduates. The President sees men and women in every possible condition of joy, happiness, and satisfaction, and of anxiety, terror, and distress. . . . I have seen a mother and daughter called in the middle of the night to the room of a son and brother from whom they had parted but a few hours before—and parted with reproaches—to find that son lying dead by his own hand. I have had to tell parents the worst possible news about a son,—that he was sick,

and the only question was how many hours he would live, or that he had become a gambler, a profligate, or a criminal. I have seen young men suddenly subjected to the greatest griefs of life. In all these conditions the sympathetic observer asks himself: What is the support of this human being under such circumstances? Who helps him, what bears him up? What supported that mother looking at the dead body of her son lying on the bed or that father hearing that his son had become a thief? The answer is that support comes from the very simplest propositions in religion that men can frame or have framed. Nothing of ritual, nothing of form or ceremony, nothing of elaborate doctrine, nothing of any Articles of Belief, will then avail. Creed seems to have nothing to do with such conditions. Some one firm conviction supports the human soul in such moments,—the simpler the surer. . . .

I have never seen any persons who met anxiety, pain, sorrow, or death, more calmly, more bravely, or with more resignation or more serenity than the Unitarians.

The Unitarian faith is dear to me because I was born into it, and educated in it; and because I have found it to be in my own personal experience, and in my observation of others, the most cheerful faith in the world in times of ease and prosperity, and the surest reliance of any faith in the world in times of trial and adversity. . . . If I am thankful for anything in this world, as I often am for the many privileges of my lot, I am thankful I was born into and have always lived in the simple, fundamental convictions of our Unitarian faith. To propagate that faith is, to my thinking, a holy thing, a sacred duty.—*Address at the Unitarian Club (Chicago), February* 28, 1900.

[No. 232]

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY LAYMEN

ON

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

THE SUMMARY OF AN INVESTIGATION

CONDUCTED BY

LEWIS G. WILSON

"Giving money is necessary, but does not excuse from attendance. I, therefore, accept a *contract* with the Minister to come to the service, just as much as he accepts a contract to serve us. I also contract with the Society to be one *of* that Society, and I keep my bargain. 'What's 'everybody's business' is *my* business — and I shall be there! Briefly, therefore, acceptance of *my* responsibility to a *cause*, which is *worth* my contract."

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

CHURCH ATTENDANCE.

THE testimonies here presented upon the subject of "Church Attendance" are contributed by one hundred and fifty laymen from seventy-five Unitarian churches scattered about the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific seaboards, and from several cities in Canada to Dallas and New Orleans. These men are regular attendants upon the services of their respective churches. They are not the men who comment upon the futility of the church, but those who assume its obligations and enjoy its privileges. In several instances the question why they attend church regularly has never arisen, any more than why they do a great many things which enter into the economy of life.

These men have, in the main, worked out for themselves definite and practical views concerning their relations to the communities in which they live, and have abiding convictions about their responsibilities as rational members of society. To them the church is not an institution out begging for a function and a future. They have demonstrated to their own satisfaction its importance in the world of to-day, and the factors in that dem-

onstration will appear in the evidence which is herein set before the reader.

In every community and in every church of any considerable size one finds at least a few men who are, relatively, the leaders and counsellors of the people. They may not be illustrious men in any far-reaching sense, but men of initiative, of recognized ability, of sterling integrity, and capable of accomplishing results of great benefit for those who are dependent upon strong natures for direction and advice. They are the men to whom the mothers of a given community call the attention of their sons, and say, "We ask nothing better than that you become like them," of whom it may seriously be said that they are

"Leaders of the people by their counsels,
And by their understanding men of learning for the people.

. . . . . .

Men richly furnished with ability,
Living peaceably in their habitations."

It is to such men as these that the appeal has been made with the hope that the perplexing and often discouraging subject of the place and importance of the independent church in modern life might be more clearly understood.

No attempt whatever is here made to deal

with this subject exhaustively. The men to whom reference is made live busy lives, have many duties, and little time to speculate or theorize. Therefore, only a single question in a twofold form was put to them, with the request that the answer should be concise and simple, the belief being that in the replies brought forth enough evidence would be submitted, upon the most vital point at issue, to justify certain legitimate conclusions. The question was as follows:—

> "Will you kindly state, as briefly and comprehensively as possible, why you are a regular attendant at church?
>
> "If you should suddenly find it impossible to be an attendant upon the services of your church, of just what, do you imagine, would you feel most keenly deprived?"

1. *Habit.* Out of the one hundred and fifty replies to this twofold question *fifty* specifically declare, in various ways, of which this is a good example,—

"I suppose the underlying reason is that I was brought up to go—not by rigorous insistence on the part of my parents, but from their example." That is, it is superficially a matter of *habit.* In many other than these fifty instances the nature of the more amplified answers is such that one may infer that early training and example have

had much to do in establishing the "habit." But in all these cases the formation of the habit means a great deal more than the development of a mechanical and servile response to the "call to worship." It has involved, in the course of the years, a priceless intellectual and spiritual enrichment, a power to direct the mind towards the great subject of righteous living and the ability to withdraw the attention from purely secular interests. All this will presently appear, but it is necessary to indicate here that to have been "brought up that way" implies vastly more than to have acquired a *mere* habit. In a horse or dog it would have meant simply a sensuous obedience to routine; but in a human being the formation of such a "habit" has enlisted the activity of the imagination, the orderly control of the will, and the most vital impulses, to say nothing of the cumulative results of memory and association and the deepening influences of worship itself. In short, a "second nature" has been established so firmly that it would require great effort to form the habit of staying away from church.

2. *Privilege.* In many responses the emphasis is laid upon church-going as a *privilege.* To be sure, in the majority of instances where this reason is offered, it appears in connection with what appeals to the writer

as an emancipation from some former theological unrest or some church connection which was not congenial. It is a privilege to enjoy the freedom of the liberal church and to listen to interpretations of life which seem sane and reasonable. Many replies containing this response are buoyant and enthusiastic. "It is a privilege," says one, "to assist in maintaining an institution that stands for the uplift of humanity in our community. It helps to keep the poise and sanity of daily life."

3. *Associations.* Churches appeal to people who have ideals and want to be kept true to them. Hence the friendly associations incidental to church attendance are often emphasized as forming one of its greatest incentives. One says, "Association with the actively philanthropic and church-going people is beneficial." "It excites intellectual, moral, and spiritual activity and growth." In the small country town it is a "social centre where people combine in forwarding the higher interests of the community." A great number of the answers to the question as to what would be most keenly missed if one found it impossible to attend church were received, some of which are as follows:—

"I should feel most keenly the loss of association with fellow-workers and the resultant inspi-

ration to labor for the onward and upward progress of the world."

I should miss "the fellowship and sympathy in the higher things of life."

"The weekly uplifts and greetings."

"The social element."

"I should feel most keenly the loss of companionship and sympathy of those who were spiritually and mentally enlisted in the work and service I love and cherish."

"It has been my experience, when deprived by illness for a year, . . . that I have felt the loss of association for the hour with a band of persons entertaining similar thoughts and endeavoring to work up to the same ideals that I am striving to attain."

Many more most interesting references to the value of associations might be quoted, but these will serve as examples.

4. *Duty.*

"As a child, I was brought up in the idea that it was as much a part of my duty to go to church as to go to school or eat my breakfast."

"A duty to the community and the minister to help support it"—the church.

"I deem it a duty to help build up a church in our community that fosters a search for truth, . . . that makes plain our obligation to work for the uplifting of humanity and emphasizes our responsibility to mankind as well as to the supreme Being."

"I feel that I owe a duty to do my share toward making the church a vigorous body. Attending church is the least one can do."

This sense of duty finds expression in many ways,—duty to one's self, duty to the community, duty to the church, to the minister, etc.; but here is one that includes practically all of them:—

"I believe the church to be the most potential instrumentality for good; that it stands for pure thinking and clean living (and much else); that for these reasons alone it should be supported loyally, not only by contributing money and by 'word of mouth,' but by the *personal attendance* and individual interest of every well-meaning man."

What better statement could a lover of business integrity, having a conscientious regard for every genuine responsibility, make than the following:—

"Giving money is necessary, but does not excuse from attendance. I therefore accept a *contract* with the minister to come to the service, just as much as he accepts a contract to serve us. I also contract with the society to be one *of* that society, and I keep my bargain. 'What's everybody's business' is *my* business, and I shall be there! Briefly, therefore, acceptance of *my* responsibility to a CAUSE which is WORTH my contract."

The sense of duty has many corollaries, as will appear in many of the replies which follow. One of them finds repeated expression in attendance at church for the sake of

5. *Example.* Here we have the subtlest and, at the same time, a most vital force in the building of character. To recognize one's self as an undefined but real factor, for good or ill, in one's community or family, and to try so to conduct one's self that the influences of personality shall operate in favor of everything good, is as high a purpose as any citizen can entertain. This fact needs no better support than is furnished by the large number of respondents who look back to the example and instruction of their own parents as the chief inspiration in their lives. Indifference, indolence, and indecision on the part of parents concerning the value of the church in any community cannot breed a generation of moral stalwarts. Laxity and disinterestedness on the part of any citizen towards any institution that fosters civic and religious ideals cannot generate a high-minded citizenship. And the most depressing consideration in this whole inquiry is the fact that so many excellent people, who owe an inestimable debt to their ancestors for the elements of ethical and religious strength which they have inherited, are so unaccount-

ably recreant to the duties they owe to those who are coming after. But this is a subject which deserves a more careful treatment than the limits of this report permit. We can submit only a few of the interesting references to church-going for the sake of example which lie before us:—

> "I feel it a duty encumbent upon me as far as possible by my example to lead my children in the paths which have afforded to me so much profit, satisfaction, and comfort."
>
> "We came to —— seventeen years ago with three small children. We have been rather constant at church on their account, because we believed it was better to go to church with them rather than send them alone. *We think the idea has proved a good one.*"
>
> "It is a great satisfaction to me to see my children grow up in the pleasant surroundings of a liberal church. The church is mine in the same sense that my family and business are mine. To stay away from service would to me be a loss equal to staying away from my family table or place of business."
>
> "I am so thoroughly committed to my church that I want all comers, regular and occasional, to find me in my place on Sunday."
>
> "A family life without the influence of the church to leaven its selfishness and broaden its humanity would be unfortunate."

One point ought especially to be borne in mind in connection with these references to

church attendance for the sake of example. The men here quoted are the last men in the world who could be called "pious" or "sanctimonious," as those words are popularly understood. Their responses are sent to the compiler of this report with the understanding that their names are not to be revealed, for they would resent instantly anything which could imply that they offer this reason for going to church because they presumed to pose or because they consider themselves "religious" in any sense that any frank, honest, and reasonable man may not claim essential religion. It is in this spirit that such testimonies as the foregoing and those following are given:—

"I believe strongly that the community needs the church, and that active and open co-operation of all public-spirited citizens is demanded. This is particularly true in my case, as I have three boys, the oldest just coming to manhood; and I am anxious to impress on them through my own example the desirability of joining in public service regularly."

Another writes,—

"I desire to set a constant example to my sons and to young men, of recognition and support of an institution established to do good and to lead men to higher thinking and living."

One respondent, looking back over a rich and fruitful experience, recalls "the salient points" in sermons that he heard a half-century ago, and he believes that those sermons—heard in his early childhood—have had a great influence upon him throughout his entire life. He says,—

> "Children under twelve years of age should be taken to church and have the benefit of the sermon. I am of the opinion that it is worth as much to the children as to the adult."

Another corollary which falls naturally under the general heading of duty is—

6. *Loyalty to the Institution.* In practically all of the one hundred and fifty replies this reason for church attendance is implied, even where it is not specifically stated. But in many instances it is so clearly and pungently expressed that a few responses under this head may well be reported:—

> "The church as an institution promotes good citizenship; and as a good citizen, which I aspire to be, I should support and attend it."
>
> "Feeling the church to be a guardian in our midst, a help to town, State, and good government, I cheerfully assist in its support and by my attendance, hoping the next generation may also."

Another believes that any right-minded man should be loyal to

> "the most efficient agency for cultivating the religious life."
>
> "Although I am too deaf to be able to hear either the minister or the music, I go to church because I think I owe it to myself, my family, the congregation, and to the pastor. To myself, because of the sense of worship which, in my opinion, is the real value of church-going and one needs it always; to my family, because I think it a great wrong to permit young people to grow up away from the church; to the congregation, because every regular attendant encourages the others, and we are all of us responsible for the example we furnish for good or bad; to the pastor, because, if we expect him to fulfil his mission, we must do our part, and give him all the help—moral, physical, financial—which is within our power."

There are many persons who will say that up to this point the reasons offered for going to church are largely prudential, if not superficial, and that, if the church has a reason for existing which other organizations cannot claim, there is for it a higher sphere of usefulness which has only incidentally been referred to. To some of these special motives let us now turn our attention. The first one that appears, either by direct statement or by implication, is

7. *Elevation of Character.*

"I think it makes me a better man."

"I think if the churches were all closed, the standards of morality would be rapidly lowered."

"We need the inspiration of the church service to keep us interested in the welfare of our fellow-men and to keep us from growing selfish."

"I have to guard against a persistent propensity to be an animal only."

To one respondent, church-going is necessary because of

"the steady accumulation from Sunday to Sunday to my character. I need the growth."

"Serious thinking in my better moments of the neglected duties and shortcomings in my daily life lead me, when convenient, to the church twice each Sunday, knowing that in its environment, no matter how deficient I am in the higher life, I am sure to make some progress in better living."

"Attendance at church is for me a vital safeguard and pleasant duty."

"I believe I am benefited *morally* by the uplift derived from the sermon and the music."

"Regular church attendance helps to keep the conscience clear and one's sense of right, duty, and justice up to the standard of true Christian manhood and womanhood."

It would be easy to multiply references to this phase of our subject, but these must

suffice, while we pass to one which recurs with great frequency, namely,

8. *Repair of Waste.*

One values "the weekly break in secular thoughts."

"In that quiet hour I find I repair considerable of the wear and tear incident to business life nowadays of six days in the week."

A physician, referring to the effect the church has upon the morals of the community, contributes to its support because he would "rather prevent than cure the ills of society."

Others write:—

"I feel that I am benefited *morally* by the uplift derived from the sermon and the music; *mentally*, by the change of thought and view obtained by listening to a discussion of things spiritual as distinguished from things material, to which I am forced to give my thought during the rest of the week; and, *physically*, in returning to my own work refreshed and reinvigorated therefor."

If deprived of the church services, many would miss keenly "the strength and refreshment which they give for daily life."

In the gradually ascending scale of church influences there is the constantly recurring recognition of the "corporate life" of the

congregation. The *soul of the assembly* is, psychologically, something more than the sum of its parts. A number of human beings meeting together in the spirit of reverence, entertaining, in the consciousness of their mutual presence, the same great thoughts and aspirations, and together being lifted to the higher levels of devotion, derive, individually, a benefit which cannot be realized in solitary worship or meditation. Many references were made to what we may thus call the mutual uplift.

9. *The Corporate Life of the Congregation.* In his eighty-fifth year one of the respondents, if deprived of the church service, would miss "the inspiration which is derived from numbers meeting together for the same object." In more specific terms others write as follows:—

> "What really most influences me I feel sure must be my active participation with others in such part of the service as falls to the congregation. Hymns and readings and responses are intended to appeal primarily to the emotions; but our liturgy, fortunately, is so selected that its thought content is true for to-day, and our congregations can be really saying something instead of merely repeating by rote and recalling old associations. This recurrent, joint, public assertion of the truths that are too seldom in our minds during the week must impress one who does heartily

participate even more than the more formal, more sustained, but more passive participation of the mere listener to the sermon."

"Doubts become less dark, life better worth living, through sympathy with our co-worshippers, and we obtain a better realization of the infinite possibilities of human nature."

"I believe the spiritual life, latent in all men, is stimulated and nourished by fellowship in worship."

"Probably the general attitude of worship and the uniting with others in devotional exercises and in a common expression of interest in religion make up the feature of church attendance, for which it would be most difficult to find a satisfactory substitute."

What one writer would most keenly miss if he could not attend church is the "æsthetic loss of the contact *with* and the ethical loss of the inspiration *from* the best of humanity within my sphere."

Another writes:—

"I love the blending of social and spiritual striving and sympathy."

"The assemblage accentuates the spirit of worship which should be in one's heart always."

And so other examples, expressed in differing phrase, bear testimony to the great value of the uplift which is inspired by mutual participation in worship. Thus it is that a *soul of the assembly* is created, and it reacts

upon each individual, to strengthen and inspire and purify his personal life.

10. *Spiritual Quickening.* It would be impossible to present here the many and varied answers which include spiritual inspiration as a result of church attendance. In fact, in the entire one hundred and fifty responses there are probably not more than a half-dozen that omit it. This is, of course, what we should expect, for the church itself, if it does not ultimately minister to the inner life, would have little to give it specific individuality. What interests us most, however, in this connection, are the different points of view which different men assume when considering this phase of the subject. These are business men, bankers, farmers, lawyers, doctors, judges, teachers, manufacturers, naval officers,—men, who, in the main, would probably refuse to give a definition of just what they mean by "spiritual" influence, and yet who regard it as something very real and necessary and worthy of sincere recognition. There are, possibly, a half-dozen instances where the respondents disclaim any interest in or enjoyment of "worship," as such. But in more than one hundred and forty responses this function of the church is mentioned or clearly implied. Only a comparatively small number can be reported here, but the object will be to quote those that are representative.

"The sermon is never dull. *I* am dull sometimes, but the sermon never fails to awaken thought and exalt the spirit."

"I am taken out of every-day cares and anxieties. The sermon and service help to elevate my ideals above the merely material, to give me glimpses of the spiritual and eternal."

"I am the possessor by inheritance of a spirit of reverence, love, and service. Attendance at church stimulates and enlarges this inheritance. Outside my home life my church life affords the most inviting and satisfying field of love and service." This same writer declares that, if he were deprived of the church, he would miss most keenly "the peculiar channel which my church furnishes for the sending and receiving of those wireless messages of the heart and soul which come and go like the sunlight."

Again, others express themselves upon this point as follows,—

"Prolonged absence from *any* church service is not good for the soul,—in fact, productive of a monotony in one's life."

"The services are an inspiration, and the whole atmosphere of worship, joined with my fellow-beings, lifts me to a higher plane, making the Sunday hours of religious observance a source of cheerful aspiration, quickening all good impulses and giving a greater firmness to my conviction of the reality of an eternal life."

"This world is so much with us, the present and the material so force themselves on my attention,

that I am in constant peril of becoming submerged in the temporal and transitory. The church is designed to bring the spiritual and the eternal regularly and pointedly to my attention, and to assist in preserving to my consciousness the essential nature of man and his real place in the universe. The church is the one great world organization for ideal ends."

Enforced absence from church would cause a certain judge to "feel keenly the loss of that moral and spiritual culture which worship at church on Sunday morning affords as nothing else does or can."

"I should miss the inspiration of the hour set apart for the devotional services, which distract the mind from the sordid affairs of every-day life, and inculcate into the heart of man thoughts of higher and better things."

"The church service, when true and simple, commands vast areas of beauty, and gives to all daily living a glory. I go to church regularly because I want the vision, and because I want to testify to others that the vision is there."

Although the specific purpose of this inquiry is to ascertain the essential reasons why men of pronounced leadership and intelligence attend church, there were, incidentally, among the replies, a considerable number of suggestions and a few criticisms which it seems well worth while not to omit from this compilation. First among these are certain references to the subject-matter of the sermons that seem best suited to meet the demands

of the average church-goer among those interrogated.

Sermons. As might be expected, in most cases where "inspiration" and "spiritual uplift" are mentioned by these respondents, they are more frequently derived from the *sermon* than from the *service*. In only a few instances decided indifference is expressed concerning the sermon, where the chief reason for attending church is found in the devotional exercises. It is the *sermon* that these men generally recognize as holding the commanding and vital place in the general function of the church as an institution. It also goes without saying that many responses reflect the influence of present or former ministers, and in a very large proportion there are enthusiastic words of recognition or gratitude to preachers who have shaped and inspired the lives of the writers.

It must also be remarked, in this connection, that church-going, in the majority of instances here referred to, means attendance upon the liberal, or Unitarian, church. This is especially true in the newer sections of the country where our churches have been recently planted. A minority, however, express satisfaction in the sermons and services of other churches or churches in general. A few characteristic comments upon preaching are as follows:—

"I am most enthusiastic for the church, and I believe that church audiences would be augmented by the attendance of more strong thinking men if it would more generally confine itself to the religious work for which it is established. If there is a falling off in the attendance upon divine service, I think much of it is due to the modern idea that it is the church's business to deal with and discuss the secular affairs of the day. In my judgment the strong business man of brains and experience does not go to church to listen to the discussion of economic and other questions that he has been trying all the week to solve by some one who necessarily knows less about such things than he. Let the church preach in season and out of season that physical, mental, and spiritual health mean happiness. Without these accumulation of wealth is as nothing."

It is worth not a little—especially for ministers—to get the "lay" point of view, especially when that view is one which has been gained by devoted attention to the welfare of some church through many years of genuine loyalty. The following opinion comes from such an experience.

"It would be well if no Unitarian minister should mention the name of any other church in the pulpit except in a friendly and appreciative way. Call attention to church history or belief, if desirable; but in all cases leave out the 'sting.' Our own people dislike it even more than chance visitors. I should have ministers trained to omit

'financial sermons' strictly (so called), scientific sermons, etc. The people usually question the speaker's exact knowledge of these and other kindred subjects, and go away with a feeling of 'waste of time,' 'nothing to take away.' I think a minister should confine his sermons to subjects which tend toward the uplifting of his people, something which will 'take hold' and help against the struggle."

A slightly different view of this matter is contained in this comment,—

"I think, if ministers would use ideas and people of the present generation, they would be more effectual. It would bring the subject nearer home. For instance, Moses may have been a very good man, but not many folks know much about him."

There are a number of respondents who indicate, incidentally, that their interest in church-going is stimulated because the minister preaches upon so-called "popular" subjects. But instances of this sort are not considered at any length, and the real power of attraction when "popular" subjects are chosen, seems to lie rather in the personality and method of the minister than in the subject-matter of his message. Thus, for instance, one writes that going to church

"gives me once a week a rational discussion of some theme in religion or sociology by a man who has added leisure to ability in its study."

Music. Many references to music as a source of inspiration and pleasure appear, but not with sufficient emphasis to deserve extended notice. A single reference may be interesting for its practical suggestion.

> "Except where the best music can be provided, I believe congregational singing should be substituted for the paid choir. It is a trial to one's peace of mind to be practised upon every Sunday morning by untalented music students of the primary or grammar grade."

In General. It would hardly exhaust the important testimony of these communications to draw this report to a close without including a few reflections and statements which, perhaps, could not be clearly classified under any of the foregoing divisions:—

> "I feel," writes one, "that the church needs *me*, —needs my help, co-operation, and sympathy."
>
> "If I could not attend church," says another, "I should feel like a beggar and as if I had lost the best chance for a meal there was in town."
>
> "I feel, when I am forced to absent myself from regular church attendance for any long period, a sort of spiritual hunger."
>
> "While there, I feel in harmony with the solemnity of life, and the beautiful expressions of aspiration, faith, and love, together with good music, are all uplifting and satisfying elements."
>
> "Having been a fairly regular attendant upon church services for many years, I would feel much like a shipwrecked sailor upon a desert island if

deprived of my church associations; and it is difficult to discriminate between them. Sermons, clubs, classes, fellowship, are all good to me and good for me, and all are the better for me and do me the more good because I have a good wife, who for nearly fifty years has enjoyed these things with me."

Conclusion. The reader must see that it has obviously not been possible to enumerate here every good reason which these laymen have furnished for their love of and loyalty towards the church.

If any contributor to these pages shall miss here some important point upon which he has earnestly laid special stress, the compiler can only say that nothing of genuine significance has wittingly escaped his attention, and what he has failed to report verbatim he has endeavored to include, in substance, in the language of some other writer. One striking fact appears, which is worthy of mention. In not a single instance in the entire one hundred and fifty replies is there any reference to church-going, worship, doctrine, sacrament, or belief as a special provision for future salvation. It has apparently not occurred to one of these gentlemen that there ever was a time when he was "lost," or a time when he became "saved," or a future for which he must make any other preparation than that which is involved in living a true, progressive, and reverent life. This

could not have been possible many years ago, but it shows how utterly obsolete in our own churches has become the so-called "theological" view-point among thoughtful and practical men.

And, finally, this summary must give evidence to the brethren of the ministry that the work in which they are engaged is of supreme importance. If strong men confess their need of the moral stimulus and the spiritual uplift which is in the gift of the true prophet, then his contribution to his time has no equal. If men like these hold themselves to their duties and feel themselves bound to the emulation of the young, and are made loyal to splendid tasks because their churches stay and steady them when the conflict against personal righteousness, purity, and civic honor is on; if the "wear and tear" of secular labors is thus repaired; if thus their imaginations are suffused with blessed memories and the sustaining comfort of a great hope, while their ideals are thus made to shine through the clouds of common interests,—then, surely, our ministers are serving at the fountains of life. Tested by the foregoing evidence, it must be said of the true preacher and spiritual counsellor that

"His name shall live from generation to generation.
"Nations shall show forth his wisdom,
"And the congregation shall declare his praise."

[No. 233]

MIRACLES IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE

BY

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Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N.Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

MIRACLES IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE.

Do miracles happen,—that is, miracles in the sense of violations or contraventions or suspensions of nature's laws? Have such miracles ever happened? Does religion need a basis of such miracles to rest upon, as the world has so generally been taught to believe? Rather, is not true religion something quite apart from miracles? Are not its foundations natural and eternal, laid in the very soul itself, so that it remains firm and indestructible, whether miracles happen or not?

These are questions which are coming more and more to the front in the thinking of our day.

In reading the story of the life and teachings of Jesus in the Gospels, we more than once find him complaining, with a touch of disappointment and sadness, that the people are forever seeking signs and wonders instead of caring for that moral and spiritual truth which he proclaims, which needs no signs and wonders for its support, which appeals straight to the reason and conscience and heart of every human being, and is its own witness.

This was a difficulty which Jesus encountered all the way through his ministry. He was intent upon helping men to become reasonable, reverent, loving, kind, at one with God and their fellows; while they were intent upon seeing strange things. He cared for a religion of the pure heart and the right life; while they cared for one of marvels and outward show.

The same contrast has been more or less seen in every age, between the highest religion and the lower. Ever the ignorant and worldly demand signs and miracles; but ever the true prophets of God—those who possess the spirit and deep insight of Jesus—see that these things are superficial, and that the only religion that can renovate the world is that which pushes them aside as irrelevant, and makes its appeal not to the curiosity, but to the consciences of men.

When Christianity came into the world, and for sixteen or seventeen hundred years thereafter, that is, until the birth of modern science, there seemed nothing essentially unreasonable about a miracle, because it was not known that the world was governed by orderly processes. With the discovery of Kepler's laws of planetary motion, however, and Newton's law of gravity, and all the other revelations of modern science which followed, the universe came to assume to men an entirely new aspect. It was not only vastly enlarged, but into it was brought a unity which previously men had known nothing about; namely, the unity of all-pervading, all-governing law. The coming in of this new conception of necessity gave a staggering blow to miracles, although previously few had thought of doubting them.

Indeed in the ages before the scientific conception of nature came on the scene, why should men have doubted? Their fathers before them believed. They had a vast amount of evidence, which in those unscientific and uncritical ages seemed to them good, to prove that the miraculous occurred. The existence of miracles perfectly accorded with what they supposed to be God's method of governing the uni-

verse; namely, by direct, personal, arbitrary volition. Why therefore should not the men of those times have believed in miracles? For them not to have done so would itself have been a miracle.

But, with the rise of the new conception of the universe which modern science and knowledge have brought about, all has changed. When it is understood that God works everywhere according to law, miracles disappear,—there is no longer any place for them. They would be breaks, interferences with established order, the coming of discord into a great harmony. Hence the phenomenon which we see in Christian lands to-day,—namely, much distrust of miracles among intelligent minds even in the most orthodox churches; while outside such churches, especially among scientists, scholars, and men of reading and independent thinking, there is almost universal relegation of them to a place among the superstitions of the past.

But, if thoughtful men are coming more and more to look upon miracles as not credible, they are also coming to see that they are not necessary to religion.

The claim has been stoutly made in the past that the miracles of the Bible are a proof of the truth of Christianity. That claim is fast weakening: thoughtful minds are seeing that there is no necessary connection between physical miracles and moral truth. If it were demonstrated that every miracle reported in the Old Testament or the New actually happened, or a hundred times as many, that fact would not prove the truth or the untruth of any ethical or spiritual teaching found in the Bible. If the religious teachings of Jesus are true, they are true; if we grant that he wrought miracles, that does not make them

any more true; or, if we think he did not work miracles, that does not make them any less true. Suppose I should say to you that hate is better than love, and then should work a miracle, —for instance, the turning of this pencil into a serpent,—would that prove it true that hate *is* better than love? Or suppose I should turn a thousand pencils into serpents, or work a thousand other miracles, would they all combined have anything whatever to do with proving that hate is better than love? Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Was that true? Why? Because he wrought miracles? Suppose he had not wrought miracles, would it not have been just as true that it is more blessed to give than to receive? Do the Beatitudes rest upon miracles? Does the Lord's Prayer? Does the Golden Rule? These illustrations help us to see that moral and religious teachings, whether in the Bible or outside of it, in the very nature of the case are unaffected by any supposed miracles.

The abler and fairer minded of the theologians themselves see this absence of connection between physical marvel-working and the establishment of moral or spiritual truth, and try to bridge over the chasm in this way: They say that he who works miracles must get his power so to do from God. But God would not give a man such power unless the man were good and truthful. When therefore the men of the Bible come to us teaching certain things and at the same time working miracles, we are obliged to believe what they teach, because the miracles are, as it were, God's credentials,—God's indorsement of their truthfulness.

This reasoning might have some plausibility, were

it not for the fact that it is founded altogether upon assumptions. In the first place it is an assumption to say that he who works miracles must get his power to do so from God. Our friends who make this argument themselves believe both in a devil and in angels. How, then, do they know but that this superhuman power through which the miracle working is done comes from either the devil or else from some good or bad angel? When Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh and performed the miracle of turning Aaron's rod into a serpent, hoping thus to influence the monarch to let the children of Israel go, we read that Pharaoh called in his wise men and magicians, and they did exactly the same miracle: they threw down their rods as Aaron had thrown down his, and their rods, too, became every one a serpent. Our theological friends would hardly claim this to have proved that those Egyptian miracle-workers were good and truthful men, to whose religious teachings God gave sanction or indorsement by thus empowering them to work their miracles.

Balaam was not a very good or truthful person, or one on whose utterance it would be safe to put much dependence, though he is represented as uttering one of the most miraculous predictions in the Bible. Both in the Old Testament and in the New we have accounts of miracles wrought by men who are anything but good or truthful. Jesus himself says (Matt. xxiv. 24): "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall show great signs and wonders" to deceive men. Again he says (Matt. vii. 22): "Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done

many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." The Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, contains many accounts of miracles, some of them very great and startling, wrought by the enemies of God on the earth (Rev. xiii. 13, 14; xvi. 13, 14; xix. 20) for the express purpose of deceiving men and making them believe falsehood. Thus you see that by the teaching of the Bible itself the power to work miracles does not prove that the one who possesses it is good or truthful, or from God, or is necessarily in any way commissioned or sent or indorsed by God. The miracles may be wrought for the express purpose of making the people believe that he is from God when he is not, and that he is speaking the truth when in fact he is speaking falsehood.

I have already referred to the attitude of Jesus toward miracles; but there is more still that ought to be said upon that subject. We read again and again of his drawing the attention of the people away from the things done by him which had a miraculous look. He refuses to work miracles to convince persons of the divine character of his mission. He even shows positive distress sometimes because the people care for these things so much instead of for the things of real importance; for we read, "Jesus groaned in his spirit, and said, Why doth this generation ask for a sign (a miracle)?"

Thus it is that he chides, over and over again, the desire of his followers for miracles as a proof of his teaching, and insists that the teaching is its own proof. Truth is truth, and falsehood is falsehood, all the same whether it be associated with miracles or

not. The Old Testament books of Job, Isaiah, and the Psalms, and the New Testament Gospels and Epistles, do not owe their beauty and truth and helpfulness to the fact that they are bound in a volume that contains records of miracles. These books would be just as full of beauty and moral power and inspiration if no man on the earth had ever dreamed of a miracle. The Twenty-third Psalm, the Sermon on the Mount, Paul's matchless chapter on charity, need no proof of miracles. Trying to prop them up or to prove them true by miracles is about as reasonable as trying to prop up the Rocky Mountains with sticks or to prove their existence by syllogisms.

So that I say, even if we granted the genuineness and historic character of all the miracles of the Bible or of a thousand times as many, we should not thus furnish any proof whatever of the truth of Christianity. The great life-giving moral and spiritual teachings of Jesus and Paul lie in a different continent, nay, a different world, from that of prodigies and miracles, and rely upon a wholly different kind of evidence. This our modern age is coming to see. Thus we need not be alarmed at the tendency of thinking persons to reject the miraculous. It does not necessarily mean that they are losing their belief in religion or their sense of its value, but only that they are finding their evidence of its truth and worth in a direction which seems to them more reliable than the old. The question of the miraculous presents itself to-day to scientists and men imbued with the modern spirit somewhat as follows:—

I. If miracles have ever happened, in Bible times or any other, why do they not happen to-day? But can any one point to a miracle within our generation

which has been established by so carefully guarded scientific tests that there is no room for doubt about it? For example, the raising to life of a body which had been so long dead that a commission of scientific experts examining it had found it to have entered upon the process of decomposition, or the restoring of a new sound arm to a man whose arm had been amputated? Is there any case on record as occurring within our day, of a miracle such as one of these?—or any other equally well authenticated, so that the scientific men would have no doubt about it? If not, why not? If veritable miracles—miracles which would have stood the test of the light of our modern civilization and science—actually occurred in the old times of two thousand or three thousand years ago, why do not miracles capable of standing the same test occur now?

It is true that we do have reports of miracles occurring to-day. Such reports come to us in great numbers, from Roman Catholic shrines in different parts of the world, from faith-healers, from prayer-healers, from men and women who, with one theory or another and under one name or another, claim to cure human bodies of their many infirmities by some sort of supernatural agency. But under a very little careful examination by unprejudiced men and by scientific methods, the miraculous element always takes wing.

Doubtless there are things occurring nowadays that are not fully explained,—things which to us with our present degree of knowledge are shrouded in mystery. But mystery is not necessarily miracle. To say that anything really miraculous—that is, anything contrary to well-established laws of nature—occurs to-day is what at least our scientists and men

best qualified to judge, ninety-nine in a hundred of them, deny.

And now is it any wonder if this absence of present-time miracles, or at least their doubtful character, throws doubt upon those of the past? If what is supposed to be miraculous to-day fades away in the light of scientific examination, is it strange that multitudes of minds find themselves compelled to believe that the so-called miracles of the old time continue to keep their places as miracles only because we are unable to reach and test them, but that, if we could get to them and examine them carefully and scientifically, as we do the so-called miracles of the present, we should find them, too, quickly losing their miraculous character?

II. Another thing which with many persons casts suspicion upon miracles is the fact that, as we look over the history of the world, we find them always seeming to have a sort of affinity for superstitious ages and low states of civilization. Almost invariably in those ages in the history of any people in which civilization and popular intelligence rise highest, we find not only the fewest miracles reported, but the least belief in those which are reported. Why is this? If miracles are facts, capable of verification, why do they not flourish as much in light as in darkness, in ages of intelligence and science as in ages of credulity, and among the intelligent as among the ignorant?

III. A third thing that stands in the way of belief in miracles is the fact that the very classes of persons who contend most stoutly for their own miracles usually deny most vehemently the truth of all miracles outside of their own. Miracles are not pe-

culiar to Christianity: nearly all religions have them in great numbers. Yet the followers of each religion deny the miracles of all religions except their own. They examine the proofs of the miracles of other faiths and pronounce them weak and inconclusive. It is only the proofs of the miracles of their own faith, in favor of which we may reasonably suppose them to be prejudiced, that they conceive to be adequate. This being the case, what wonder if men who, occupying the position simply of scientists and scholars, and not caring to bolster up any, but simply to judge impartially of all alike, conclude that the proofs of miracles of all the religions of the world are equally inadequate? In other words, what wonder if with the Christians they conclude that the proofs of the Mohammedan miracles are inconclusive, and with the Mohammedans that the proofs of the Brahman miracles are inconclusive, and with the Brahmans and Mohammedans that the proofs of the Christian miracles are equally inconclusive?

IV. Again, another objection to miracles lies in the fact that the moment we have accepted any of them there seems to be absolutely no place to stop. We have entered upon a road that has no end and leads into all sorts of superstitions and credulities. Suppose we say we will accept a few miracles, but not many. What shall these few be? And what shall be the test by which to decide what to accept and what to reject? If we determine to cast out all except those which are corroborated by strong proofs, certainly we shall have to cast out more or less of those found in the Bible. How strong proofs do you think we have, for instance, that Eve was made out of a rib of Adam; or that the ass of the prophet

Balaam spoke in human language; or that Jonah lived three days in the great fish, and then was cast up alive and well on the shore of the sea; or that the sun stood still at the command of Joshua; or that the walls of the city of Jericho fell down as the result of the blowing of the rams' horns of the children of Israel? If, however, we do not cast out any of the Bible miracles, but accept them all, surely we ought to be consistent, and accept also the multitudes of miracles outside of the Bible, which present themselves to us based on quite as good evidence. As a result, there would seem to be no end to the miracles which we should find ourselves called upon to accept. The moment we begin to believe miraculous stories, or anything else, without good evidence,—evidence that will stand the test of the most thorough investigation,—we are lost, we are in a path that finds no stopping-place this side of the credulity, superstition, and fanaticism which have ever been the curse of all unenlightened religion.

V. It is felt by many that to admit miracles is to degrade the character of God. It makes him changeable and arbitrary. His government is no longer a perfect government, conducted according to a wise method and a regular order set in operation in the beginning; but it is a government that requires to be interfered with, mended, supplemented from time to time. At best a miracle seems to be a patch. Does God's plan of things need perpetual patching?

VI. Still farther, it seems impossible to reconcile the idea of miracle with belief in the goodness of God. If God's plan of governing the world admits of miracles wherever and whenever he may choose, why is it that he does not work them oftener? We read in the

Bible about God working miracles from time to time for the benefit of this person and that. But why so few? If he was good, why did he not work them for the benefit of everybody? And to-day, if God is at liberty to set aside his laws and work miracles at any time, why does he allow any pain or suffering in the world? Why does he not cure all the sick instead of letting them linger on in misery? Why does he not furnish food to all the starving? A great steamer goes down at sea with all on board; a great river overflows its banks and destroys millions of property and hundreds of lives; a fire in a great city renders thousands of persons homeless. Why does not God interfere and prevent these awful calamities? If he is at liberty to interfere, is he kind when he does not? Thus it seems impossible to see how we can keep any ground for belief in the goodness of God on the theory that he can work miracles when he pleases. But if he rules the world by law, and if law is good, then is God good, in spite of calamities and pains that come to men as the result of their violations of law. The science of our time has learned that "all is law." The religion of our time is beginning to learn that "all is love," because law itself is love. We had feared to admit that we are environed by law lest that might mean that God does not care for us. But we are learning that it is through his laws that he manifests his care. His laws are his encompassing arms, and in those arms of care, of love, of eternal security, he bears us as a mother her child.

VII. A difficulty in the way of believing in miracles, which is serious, is the famous objection of Hume, that miracles are a contradiction of human experience. Human experience is, that nature's laws are

uniform, constant, not subject to suspensions. If we accept the miracles of the Bible or of any past time, it must be upon the testimony of others. Which is the more credible, that human testimony should sometimes err, or that nature at times should forget her uniformity and become irregular? We have experience every day of human testimony being fallible, but none that nature's laws are fickle. When therefore the Bible, or the Vedas, or the Koran, or any other book of the past, comes to us with accounts of miracles, we are bound to test it by this principle. For example, we read in the New Testament that on a certain occasion Jesus turned water into wine. Our experience is (and, so far as we can learn, the experience of the world is the same) that water cannot be changed to wine except through the slow summer-long processes of nature in the grape-vine. Therefore, we can more easily believe that those who reported this miracle were in some way mistaken than we can believe that what was said to have occurred actually did occur. Or, to take an Old Testament illustration, we read that the three Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in Babylon, were cast into a burning furnace, walked in the midst of the fierce flames, and at the end came out unharmed. Now we know that it is the nature of flame to consume organized bodies placed in the midst of it. When, therefore, we read that, when kindled to its very hottest, it did not burn these men, we find ourselves obliged by the very laws of our mind to conclude that there is a mistake somewhere. When it comes to the alternative either to believe that fire did not consume where it is its nature to consume, and what since the world began it always has consumed, or that some-

body has erred,—observing improperly, or reporting incorrectly, or mistaking a legend for a true story, or something of the kind,—there is no room left us for choice: we are simply obliged to believe the latter, and cannot believe the former. This is a way of looking at the subject of miracles that prevails widely to-day, and that tends to prevail more and more, especially among scientists.

Such, then, are some of the modern difficulties in the way of the acceptance of miracles.

Some of you say to me: If we do not accept the miracles of the Bible as historic, what shall we say about them? Are we not compelled to declare them falsehoods, written and palmed off on a credulous humanity for the purpose of deceiving?

I answer: There seems no ground for setting up any such alternative. For one to suppose that such an alternative exists is to show either that he knows little about the origin of the Bible, or else that he only very superficially understands human nature.

The true explanation of the miracles of the Bible clearly is, that they are a natural and an inevitable product of a period in the world's history before the birth of science, and before men had found out that they lived in a universe governed by law. Given a devout people living in such an age, and you will as certainly have belief in miracles as you will have any other necessary form of activity of the human mind.

To the child everything is miracle: to the unscientific mind everything is miracle. Up to the point where the scientific conception of the uniformity of nature's operation arises, men believe in miracles as inevitably as in the rising of the sun; and because

they believe in miracles and expect them to occur, and none have learned to apply accurate tests, of course they find them; and, when they write books, of course the books will contain accounts of them. This is the explanation of the miracles of the Bible. Coming from the times and the people it did, it was impossible but that the Bible should have contained records of miracles, and records made in all honesty and good faith.

We all know how great is the power of the human imagination to invent,—to convince us that things are external realities which really have no existence except in the mind. We know, too, on how slight foundations stories spring up, even in our age of incredulousness and open eyes. So also we understand how stories grow by repetition, until often they can scarcely be recognized as the same things they were when they started on their rounds.

We must not forget that these so-called miraculous events of the Bible were very few, if any, of them written down at the time of their occurrence. Instead of being recorded then, as it was indispensable that they should be if accuracy were to be ensured, they were carried in men's minds for years, or handed down from father to son for generations, before being committed to writing. Even the best-authenticated of the miracles of Jesus seem not to have been written down for well-nigh a generation after his death, while some bear evidence of a much later date. Now is it credible that stories of any kind, but particularly stories supposed to involve an element of the supernatural, and, above all, stories which the persons telling them were interested to make appear as marvellous as possible, could thus continue to be told

orally for a quarter or a half century or more without change, without material growth and embellishment?

That the narrators and recorders of these stories were interested to make them out as marvellous as possible, becomes evident as soon as we remember that in the popular mind, at that time, the working of miracles on the part of a religious teacher was regarded as the great proof that he was from God. The legends of Elijah and Elisha were full of miracles. It was the received opinion that the Messiah, when he came, would perform many miracles. Hence, naturally, the disciples of Jesus after his death would emphasize everything in his life, which had in it any look at all of the miraculous. They would go forth telling the story of his life, out of minds filled with belief in marvels, to other minds equally ready to believe in marvels, and themselves interested in the deepest way to make the most possible out of everything in his life that had the least look of miracle or marvel about it. If time would allow, I should be glad to take up many of the individual miracles of both the New Testament and the Old, and trace the successive steps through which we may suppose them to have passed, from the first small germs of fact that probably in most cases lay at their beginning, up and on through growth and accretion and transformation, until at last we have the full grown, out-and-out miracles, as they stand recorded in the Bible. But time will not allow me to enter upon this ground.

From all that I have been saying it is clear that the time has gone by when everybody can accept miracles. If a belief in miracles is essential to Christianity, then Christianity has already begun to wane; and from this time forward the best minds of the world

in greater and greater numbers are certain to take their place outside of it. But *is* belief in miracles essential to Christianity? We have already found our answer in the teaching of Jesus himself. Miracles may be necessary to certain theological systems which have long called themselves Christianity. They are not necessary to that moral and spiritual Christianity whose soul is found in the Sermon on the Mount and the other teachings of Jesus.

The best religious thought of our time is coming to see that miracles instead of being a help are actually a hindrance to religion: they are about the heaviest weight that religion in our day has to carry.

Wrote John Quincy Adams: "The miracles in the Bible furnish the most powerful of all the objections against its authenticity, both historical and doctrinal; and were it possible to take its sublime morals, its unparalleled conceptions of the nature of God, and its irresistible power over the heart, with the simple narrative of the life and death of Jesus, stripped of all the supernatural agency and all the marvellous incidents connected with it, I should receive it without any of those misgivings of unwilling incredulity as to the miracles which I find it impossible altogether to cast off."

John Quincy Adams voices the feeling and judgment of thousands of the most intelligent and devout minds of our age. Sooner or later it must come to what he suggests,—the better part of the Christian world will yet take "the sublime morals of the New Testament, its unparalleled conceptions of the nature of God, and its irresistible power over the heart, with the simple narrative of the life and death of Jesus,"—these and these alone,—as the essentials of Christianity, leaving

all questions as to interferences with the laws of nature, and the credibility or incredibility of wonder-stories found in the Bible or elsewhere, to be settled by each man for himself, as being things purely speculative and not touching at all the real heart of religion. If a man thinks he has grounds for believing these things, let him believe them: that is his affair. On the other hand, if a man cannot believe them, because the evidence seems to him to be against them, it is not for me or for anybody else to say that he must believe them, or that he is irreligious or not a Christian because he does not. If Jesus treated all such things as non-essentials, it is not for me to treat them as essentials. To love God and man, and to do to others as I would have them do to me, that is true Christianity. To reverence God and work righteousness, that is true religion. Compared with these, all questions of belief or non-belief in miracles are of weight as light as the mote that floats in the sunbeam.

It is strange and sad that the religious teachings of the past have so largely been such as to make us look for God only in events which are extraordinary and out of the usual course of nature. That is not the direction at all in which to look for God. The place where God really reveals himself is not in a sun which stands still a little while on a particular afternoon in Palestine, but in that sun which never stands still in any land,—which moves on eternally in tireless strength and in obedience to law, carrying day and night and summer and winter forever round the earth. The place where God really reveals himself is not in a miracle wrought through any single man or on any single occasion, to multiply loaves of bread so as to

feed a company gathered on the shore of a Galilean lake. God's true revelation of himself, were our eyes only not too blind to see it, is in that ceaseless multiplying of loaves in the cornfields of a thousand valleys which gives the whole world its food.

It is a mistake, it is all wrong, to think that miracles, even granting their reality, can reveal God better than what is not a miracle,—the abnormal better than that which is natural, the occasional better than that which is constant. The new and larger thought of God and religion which is coming to the world has in it no room for miracle. If we would see the glory of God, we must teach ourselves to look for him not in interferences with his own beneficent plan of things, but in law, in order, in the cosmos, in the mighty and harmonious on-goings of nature. Here, not in the trivialities of signs and wonders, God stands full-revealed, in power, in wisdom, in majesty, in goodness.

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[No. 234]

THE CHRISTMAS BIRTH-POEM

BY REV. WILLIAM C. GANNETT

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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THE CHRISTMAS BIRTH-POEM.

MANY people are asking to-day, Is the Christmas Birth-Story, as told in the Gospels, literally true? If not, why not? And if not true, how did it rise as a story and enshrine itself in the two Gospels? And why is it that those who do not think it is history love it so well? By what title and right do *we* use it as we do in home and in church and in Sunday school?

The story lies there in the Gospels echoing with song, and all a-shine with miracle and angel-glow. There are two accounts, one in Matthew, the other in Luke. Save for the glitter of the Magi and their gifts and their travelling star, Matthew's story is sombre,—a record of dismay, of tragedy, of hair-breadth escapes. Luke's is a smiling idyl, a "pastoral symphony," every incident joyous. They probably show what many in the Jewish-Christian communities were coming to believe concerning the birth of Jesus some sixty or seventy years after his death, about the time when "Matthew" and "Luke" received their final forms. But the stories are so unlike, and some of the details so hard to dove-tail together, that it is probable that the two series, rising from a common source,—the popular belief that, in some way or other, Jesus was at once "Son of David" and "Son of God," —developed along two independent lines of tradition. Joining the two accounts, however, we have the following series of wonderful events.

The Birth-Stories in the Gospels.

First, the birth miraculous of little John, the herald of the coming King (Luke i. 5–25, 57–80). Then an angel comes to Joseph and to Mary separately, to tell each one that the first-born child shall not be Joseph's child at all,—it shall be Mary's only, born direct from the creative power of God; and that it shall be Israel's long-expected Savior-King (Matt. i. 18–25; Luke i. 26–38). Next, the betrothed lovers travel together from Nazareth to Bethlehem,—a census requiring them to be registered in the city of David, Joseph's royal ancestor; and soon, one night, a band of singing angels startles some shepherds in the fields near by with the glad news that their "Christ" is born; and the shepherds, hasting away to Bethlehem, find the babe lying in a manger (Luke ii. 8–20). A few days after, two aged saints in Jerusalem recognize the babe as he is brought into the temple, and praise God they have lived to see the "Christ"; and one of them already seems to see afar his rejection and death (Luke ii. 21–38). Then "wise men" from the east, signalled onward by a star, arrive at Jerusalem, bringing gifts for the little Christ-King; and the star travels in the sky to guide them (Matt. ii. 1–12). To make sure of killing this little King of Israel, old King Herod sends and slays all the young babes in Bethlehem. But Jesus escapes, because in dreams angels warn Joseph to flee with his family to Egypt, and when to come back, and where to live in safety (Matt. ii. 13–23). So the angels in heaven rejoiced, and the wide east welcomed the Mighty Child, although a manger-cradle, and a shepherd's greeting, and an old man's

blessing, and a threatening sword, were all that his own people had to offer him!

Now are these stories true?

There is really little need of scholarship to answer this question. It is true that the events which, having no miracle in them, look most historical,—the genealogies, the Bethlehem birthplace, the census, the slaughter of infants,—true that these events must be referred to scholars for authentication; and also true that each and all begin to dissolve as "facts" as soon as the scholars do carefully examine them. But taking the story in the large, five plain, strong facts and parallels appear, which any one with little pains can verify, and these suffice as basis for common-sense judgment.

(1) *The Birth-Legends Found in but Two Gospels.*

Only two Gospels contain the story. Neither Mark, the earliest Gospel, nor John, the latest, mentions this stupendous miracle of Virgin-Birth. In the two Gospels which do record it, it is found only in the opening chapters; nowhere else is it even alluded to; not a hint of it is given by Jesus himself, or by his family, disciples, friends or foes. There is no reference to it in Acts, that book so full of formal pleas for Jesus' claims. And no reference to it in the whole circuit of Epistles, though Paul in his Epistles, and others in Epistles accredited to Paul, argue hard to establish and glorify Jesus as Lord. Strange, is it not, such paucity of record and allusion, if the story be true? Strange, also, that what allusions there are to the parentage of Jesus—and there are several—all

point away from any miracle and towards common birth.

(2) *Genealogies Traced through Joseph.*

Of the two Gospels that tell the stories, each one also gives a human genealogy of Jesus. These two genealogies differ widely and irreconcilably, but they both trace his lineage through Joseph to King David. The long-promised national Messiah, whenever he should come, was to be of David's blood. This was the most important point of the many Old Testament prophecies interpreted as authenticating the Messiahship. According to the old popular belief, then, Jesus must be the "Son of David," anyway; according to the new-dawning popular belief, he must also, in some literal sense, be "Son of God." The genealogies vouched for the one ancestry, the story of the Virgin-Birth for the other; and, irreconcilable as the two vouchers are, the honest Gospels naïvely give them both. But what shall *we* say to them?

(3) *Probable Old Testament Sources.*

It is easy to account for half a dozen of the Birth-Story items by tracing them to their probable sources in such Old Testament passages as I have just alluded to. The Gospels themselves name these sources. "Fulfilment of prophecy" the process is called, and great reliance was placed on it as evidence by the Jews in old time, and by many Christians still. In most cases some prophet's actual meaning is twisted all awry to reach the significance desired. They are not instances of prophecy fulfilled, but of common

analogy, and often very forced analogy at that. The old passage sometimes even generates the later incident; and this is very probably the origin of some of our Birth-Story incidents. A trick of intellectual obliquity all this, but all in perfect honesty, again. It is the same act of "imagination" which gives Swedenborg, or Mrs. Eddy, or any Second Adventist interpreter of Daniel, their several "Keys to Scripture." Are they dishonest? No, but very credulous over their own ingenuities.

To illustrate this by one important instance. The Greek translators of the Old Testament inadvertently translated a Hebrew word in Isaiah (vii. 14), which means a "marriageable young woman," by a word which means a "virgin." Hence arose a misunderstanding which rendered the use of the verse in Matthew i. 22–23 possible: "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us." Moreover, this passage in Isaiah, who lived some seven hundred and fifty years B.C., refers to an event expressly said by him to be close at hand in his own time. And this mistranslation, mis-transferred across eight Hebrew centuries, and then wholly misinterpreted, contributed materially to the great misconception which has reigned through all these Christian centuries since.

(4) *Birth-Legends in the Apocryphal Gospels.*

Thinking over facts like these, however much we want our shining stories true, we can hardly help beginning to suspect that they may be stories of

idealization rather than of history. And that thought is confirmed by watching, as we can, how quickly these Gospel stories grow longer and more wonderful. In books not admitted into the New Testament, but great favorites with Christians of the early centuries, and spuriously fathered on apostles as the "Gospel of James," of "Thomas," and of others,—in these so-called "Apocryphal" books each separate birth-miracle of our Gospels blossoms out into a whole cluster of miracles. Some of these are pretty; some grotesque; some represent young Jesus as a very Puck of roguery. They are Christian folk-tales, showing how the popular imagination conceived that a God-child might be born and might behave. Current among the people in the second and third centuries, they kept on growing more abundant, coarser, wilder, well into the Middle Ages.

See what you think of some of these new Birth-Stories. Are they not pretty? Are they likely? The birthplace, we are told, was a dark cave, which Mary's entrance lights as with a sun. At the birth-instant everything in Nature stops and hushes, spell-bound,—birds in the air with their wings outspread, laborers at their lunch with hands half-way lifted to their lips, goats at the spring with necks half-bent to drink. When the child is born, the ox and ass, near by, kneel down and worship him. A voice is heard from the cradle, saying, "Mary, I am Jesus, the Son of God!" The shepherds' names are told us. Those wise men from the east become three kings from three different quarters of the earth,—Europe, Asia, and Africa. One is old and white-haired, one swarthy and in mid-life, one a ruddy, beardless youth,—or else a negro, for the stories differ about him. Their "star" spoke

to them, and moved two years before them on their way, they needing neither food nor drink for all that time. The story of the journey into Egypt is a diary of the cures that the baby wrought and the homage paid to him. Idols fall to the ground before him, lions and dragons kneel, robbers are converted on the spot, roses spring up in his path, palm-trees bend their branches to offer him their dates, fountains break out in the sand to quench his thirst. All these stories of the baby-god are told us in detail. And now the idealization spreads. His parents begin to catch from their child the wonder-glow. Mother Mary's own birth is described as a miracle, and we hear much about her holy girlhood,—how, when three years old, she was taken to the temple to be brought up, and on the third step of the altar the little maid "danced with her feet, and all the house of Israel loved her"; and how pretty she was with her light hair and hazel eyes; and how she made her own clothes; and then about her betrothal, when twelve years old, to the widower Joseph,—a ceremony involving another pretty miracle. And at the other end of Mary's life we have an Arabian Night's tale of her glorious ascent to heaven, with the story of Joseph's death-bed,—this last as told by Jesus to his disciples.

(5) *Birth-Legends in Other Religions.*

Do we seek still further confirmation of the ease with which such Birth-Stories grow and halo the heads of holy ones? Remember, then, that Jesus is not the only wonder-born child of the Bible, though no one else is born so wondrously as he. Recall the cradle-miracles of Isaac, Samson, Samuel, and John

the Baptist (Gen. xvii.–xviii.; Jud. xiii.; 1 Sam. 1; Luke i.). In other lands and other religions stories of wonder-birth are common about their heroes. The first few pages of the "Light of Asia" tell of another Virgin Mother, with star-signs and angel-guards and dreams and gray-haired saint and bowing trees and springing flowers and gushing streams, and all the heavens and earth in jubilee over a little Savior of the World, born in India some four or five hundred years before the Christ. They called him there the Buddha, or "Enlightened One," and his religion fills Central Asia as the religion of the Christ, the "Anointed One," fills Europe. You should read those pages in the "Light of Asia." The stories of the birth of Krishna, also, the lovable God of India, bear marked resemblance to those so dear to us. In the old Persian religion, Zoroaster, its founder, and Sociosh, the expected Savior, are both described as virgin-born. In China the people glorify their emperors by tracing back their family to such a miracle. In Greece and Rome, heroes like Hercules and Romulus, philosophers like Pythagoras and Plato, great conquerors like Alexander and Cæsar, were here and there accounted for by miracles of birth.

The Stories are Early Christian Folk-Tales.

Our question was, Are the Birth-Stories in our Gospels true? Are we not ready now to judge? In the light of facts and parallels like these, what is the reasonable answer? Are all such Birth-Stories true? Or are the stories true in Jesus' case alone, while the rest are idealizations? Or are all alike the product of reverent imagination?

Surely, to common sense the last supposition seems the reasonable one. Unlikely stories need strong evidence; all these stories are unlikely stories; the best guaranteed among them are our Gospel stories, and we have seen how little evidence these, the best guaranteed, have to support them. On the other hand, all the stories seem psychologically alike; one source, the reverent imagination of the common people, amply accounts for each and all. "There is a Defoe in every age and race; it is the popular imagination"; but it is an honest and unconscious Defoe, never dreaming that his stories are not reality,—his poetry, fact. From him arise the myth, the legend, the fairy-tale, the folk-lore,—all, forms of poetry; but to the unconscious poet himself who makes them, science and history. Legends rise as unconsciously fictitious history,—fancies grown around facts so closely that people think them real parts of the fact, like a vine grown around a tree till one can hardly tell what is vine and what is tree. The Buddha, the Krishna, the Cæsar stories we call, frankly, "legends." So, too, with those luxuriant birth-stories in the Apocryphal Gospels. And so should we call our shining Gospel stories, which give us the Christmas carols. They are legends; they are early Christian folk-tales. "Bible fairy stories," a little girl called them; and that is a pretty good name, suggestive of the truth.

And this is the growing recognition to-day. Thousands to-day, and thousands more as each new Christmas comes, are reading these stories much as we read the old Greek legends of the hero-helper, Hercules, or old English legends of good King Arthur; not a bit more believingly; only more lovingly, many of us, because they have to do with Jesus. For their beauty, for their

poetry, and as signs of ancient reverence felt for him in days more primitive and ignorant than ours, we are glad that they found their way into our Bible. And we are glad, too, that we no longer believe them.

Not a Word of Jesus Lost.

"No longer believe them." Let us count our losses, and what we have not lost, as we say this. We have lost the miraculous birth, the manger-cradle, the angels' song, the shepherd's quest, the wise men's visit,—lost these all as literal facts. What have we not lost? Not the Beatitudes; not the Parables; not his Sermon on the Mount; not his "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done"; not Gethsemane; not the Cross. Nothing of the Spirit of Christmas, nothing of the Spirit of Christ. He said himself what that was: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,—to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Nothing of all this is lost. What have the Birth-Stories to do with things like these, O we of little faith? Nothing that ought to be done and might be done in his name, is lost to us. To right wrongs, to enact justice, to follow ideals, to deepen peace, to widen good-will, to reconstruct the relations between rich and poor, to ennoble the attitude of so-called Christians towards the race to which he himself belonged, to change the shotted Armadas of war into burden-bearers of benevolence between the nations,—all these lofty duties

are still ours to do, and to do in his name as followers of him, if we so will.

Nor "Incarnation" Lost.

Another thing—and friends in Orthodoxy should take comfort from this—another thing the world does not lose by losing the Birth-Stories, and that is, faith in the "Incarnation," the visible coming of God in Christ. The Birth-Stories are no wise essential to that faith. Who are the great New Testament sources of the doctrine of the Incarnation? "Paul," and the writer of "John"; and, to all appearance, "Paul" and the writer of "John" knew absolutely nothing of those Birth-Stories! To judge by the spiritual trend of their teaching, it is not too much to say they would probably have disbelieved them. Can Christendom need them, then, so much as many anxious souls are fancying? "John" is doubtless an idealized portrait, not real biography; but suppose that Jesus really said the words about himself and made the unique claims attributed to him in John, they might all be true, were Matthew and Luke as completely destitute of Birth-Stories as Mark and John itself are: their truth or non-truth stands on wholly other grounds. Let these anxious ones take heart with Paul and John, drop their physical story, believe in the things of the Spirit, and so mount to the higher reaches of their own glorious truth. I need not say that this more glorious height, the truth of Universal Incarnation, of which the common doctrine is but the mere foot-hill, is independent of the carol stories in Matthew and Luke.

Nor a Carol Really Hushed.

But the fact is, further still, that not even those Matthew and Luke stories are really "lost," that not a carol is really hushed, by ceasing to believe in the stories as literally true. When the children first find out who "Santa Claus" is, for a little while they may hang their heads in disappointment,—as I fear some dear heads are hanging now in disappointment because I have said these things. But soon the children like it all the better that the gifts do come from the father and the mother and have the home-love in them,—and *still* they hang the stockings up, still play the Santa Claus, still keep ample mystery and surprise about the Christmas. So with the Christmas story in the Gospels: when we find out what it really is, at first we may be dismayed and disappointed; soon we like it even better that Jesus came into the world like any little brother; but still, and even in the church, we love to read the story and sing the carols over, as Christmas Day comes round.

And, more, we enjoy the associations which have grown with time around the story. These Birth-Legends have played a great part in Christian history. They have made Nazareth and Bethlehem "holy places" to the world. They have filled the churches with pictures, each separate incident being source to hundreds of pictures. The Madonna and Child is *the* great subject of Roman Catholic art, and Europe in the Renaissance centuries learnt to paint by trying to paint them. They have given plays to the theatre; our modern drama grew out of the miracle and mystery plays of the Middle Ages, and no subject so popular for

them as the Nativity themes. They have brightened winter with the gladdest, merriest, friendliest festival of the whole year's round. They helped in the popular mind to shape and establish the central dogma of Christian theology. They throned in the Roman Catholic heavens a "Mother of God,"—a tenderer lover of men than all the three dim persons of the Trinity. The belief underlying all these associations is not ours; the joy in these products of the belief we share with the world that does, or did, believe.

By What Title Kept? As Poem.

And this leads to my last question. By what title do those who do not share the belief that the Christmas story of the Gospels represents fact love and use the story as their very own?

By right supreme of the human heart to poetry,—to beautiful symbols of beautiful truth wherever fit symbols are found. In religion such symbols usually begin their being as "beliefs"; and only in a second stage of their life, and perhaps when they are dying or dead as beliefs, do they become "symbols." But to this immortality they are predestined, if they are only beautiful enough. Language is full of conscious, is compact of unconscious, poetry having this origin. If born far back in time, we call such once-beliefs "myths," making free use of them as symbols, and no one misconceives us. Many a Bible once-belief has thus volatilized into poetry, and others are exhaling to-day; the Genesis, Moses, Elijah, stories furnish many examples. Eden, Ark, Covenant, the Wrestle with God, the Path through the Sea, the Law on Mount Sinai,

the Pillar of Cloud, the Still Small Voice, the Chariot of Fire,—give but a hint of the multitude.

Even so it is coming to be with the Gospel Birth-Story. Once to all Christians it was, still to most Christians it is, "fact"; to others, increasing in number, it has become but a beautiful poem. As a "belief," it is dying or dead; as a "poem," it is immortal. We are not going to say "I believe" to it, as they said in the ancient creed. In the ancient creed that was honestly said: it is not honest for such as we to say so to-day either in nursery, kindergarten or church. Our children shall know what we mean by it, just as they shall know what we mean by the other Christmas poem of Santa Claus; nor will they enjoy either poem the less for the knowing. What we mean by it; for poetry *means*, and invariably means truth truer, larger, more beautiful than the concrete prose that is always aspiring to become the poem. This is the case with the Gospel Birth-Story. Taken as poem, the truth in it vastly expands; for as poem, it has two meanings—two at least—and both of them beautiful.

The Poem of the Mother and Child.

It is the poem of the Mother and Child. Who can but love it for that? The mystery, the sanctity, the divinity in source and in advent of every child that cometh into the world,—all this lies hinted in it. Mary is every mother. Our own dear home is the Bethlehem inn. Our nursery cradle the manger. The angels rejoice with us in the advent, as well they may. Sympathy, greetings, gifts arrive, as they ought. Wise men bend in awe, and the mother ponders many things

in her heart of glory and peril for the helpless life now lying on her breast. Like the pictured Madonna on our wall, the poem hangs in our mind as symbol of that tender miracle that God is working every day in his homes the wide world over, through his millions of Marys and Josephs.

Still the angels sing on high,
Still the bearded men draw nigh,
Bringing worship with the morn,
When a little child is born;
Baby-glory in the place,
Star-look on the mother's face,
Psalm within the mother's heart,—
Christmas all in counterpart!

Blessings on the little child
In the cave far-off and wild!
For that nursery divine
Tells me well, O baby mine,
That *thou* art Emmanuel,
"God with us," come here to dwell,—
Come to say, "Since time began,
Son of God is Son of Man!"

The Poem of the Coming of the Spirit of Love.

Again, it is the poem of the Coming of the Spirit of Love on the earth. The little boy that lay on Mary's breast grew into the man who spoke the deepest secret of his being in the words, "I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give my life a ransom, for many; and this, my secret, is the way, the truth, the life, for all men. Every one that would save his life shall lose it; and every one willing to lose his life as I lose mine shall save it." He lived this secret, and he died it. And his name, through the wonderful trans-

figurations of history, has become a symbol of that way of living and dying for others; a symbol, therefore, of Love Supreme, of the Love at the heart of the Universe. We call it the Christ-Spirit. Diffused over the earth, it is the spirit of peace and good-will among men; and it brings the kingdom of God. But the Christmas poem in the Gospels is the story, told in a sweet kindergarten way, of the birth of the child whose living and dying have named that Spirit. The Spirit itself is far more ancient than Jesus; it made him to be; it laid him in Mary's arms; it lifted him to the cross; it has throned him now as ideal in the heart of the world.

These are the reasons, or some of them, why those who do not share the belief that the Christmas story represents fact still use and love the story. They think that the soul of the story is greater than its body, the "poem" than the "belief." They use the body, loving its beauty, as symbol of that soul; use it frankly, calling it poem, not history, reading it in Scripture as poem, teaching it to the children as poem; and, because they use it so frankly, they fear no serious misconception. They think that the story will gradually die as the "belief" of an age, and feel sure it will achieve immortality as a "poem" of the ages.

Three of Dr. Savage's Books

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By Minot J. Savage

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 3-4; pages, 226; price, 90 cents *net;* postage, 9 cents additional.

THE foundation truths of religion cannot be too often emphasized or repeated, and the chapters of this book go far to clear up confused popular ideas about the subjects dealt with. To such confusion of thought the author is an eager foe: one of his unvarying aims has ever been to seek the fundamental truths of religion and to present them in words so terse and simple and theologically untechnical that equivocation or misunderstanding is impossible. The pillars upon which this temple is reared are sturdy columns of rational religious conceptions which devoutly concern the development of the higher life.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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[No. 235]

The Liberal Church of To-day: Its Ministry

BY

REV. FREDERICK W. PERKINS

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N.Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE LIBERAL CHURCH OF TO DAY: ITS MINISTRY.

THE Christian Church is set in the world to exercise a spiritual leadership. Whatever other functions it may discharge, and they will be many and valuable, that function of spiritual leadership it must discharge or fail. The Christian Church is the specific institutional agency of the cause of the most masterful and ambitious leader whom history records. He believed himself sent to establish the kingdom of God, which should dominate the world; and that consciousness of leadership passed naturally and legitimately into the inmost spirit of the Church, which took up the cause he laid down. Wofully, indeed, has the Church misinterpreted its call. Too often has it forgotten that, in the kingdom it is set to establish, right alone makes might, love is the sceptre, and he who would be chief must serve. But these perversions of leadership do not overthrow the call to leadership, and any purging of the Church's spirit which expurgates the sense of leadership or the power to lead is refinement at the expense of a primary condition of success. A church which does not lead will not be suffered at last even to follow. "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The incidental business of the Church—administration of charities, fostering of social reforms, overthrowing theological errors, or championing theological truths—naturally becomes the primary business of other institutions. To the Church is presented the inexorable alternative,—spiritual leadership or oblivion.

This task of spiritual leadership rests on the Liberal Church as compellingly as on any other form of the Christian Church. Obviously, if the Church is to be a leader in the world, the minister must be a leader in the Church. What are some of the conditions of his leadership in the Liberal Church of to-day?

A primary condition is that the minister believe heartily in the Church as a distinctive institution indispensable to religion, and in his own place, provided by the Church, as one of the positions of incomparable service to men.

It ought not to be necessary to emphasize that condition, but unfortunately it is. Many obstacles stand in the way of the largest success of the ministry to-day. There is no need that I recount them. Many of them can be removed only by the laity, as they recognize more clearly the claims of the Church as a necessary social factor, as they feel more keenly their own need of its sustaining ideals and incentives, and accept their responsibilities for its vitality and power. But one obstacle they cannot remove, and should not be expected to remove; and that is the mean estimate which too many ministers place on their specific functions in society and the Church. Perhaps the trouble is that the Church does not appear to them as having a specific function. It is a tremendous obstacle, and the minister is responsible for removing it. Whether other people regard the Church as indispensable to religion or not, he must. If he cannot arouse any institutional enthusiasm within himself, he need not expect to arouse it in other people. If to him the Church is a transient and practically negligible factor in religious growth, he need not expect people to flock to his church to learn how unimpor-

tantly they are spending their time. A college teacher who laid pre-eminent emphasis on the half-truth that a man need not go to college to be educated need not be surprised at having few pupils to teach, except that in education the man of ordinary common sense would know better than to take the foolish teacher at his word.

The effective minister in the Liberal Church will, indeed, distinguish clearly between religion and its institutional expression and instrument. He will not permit ecclesiastical conformity to do duty for spiritual loyalty. He will not make it easy to substitute ritualistic propriety for moral renewal. He will insist that the test of a creed is the life it interprets and quickens. He will not teach men to cry, in uplifted adoration, Lord! Lord! regardless of whether they do the will of the Father in heaven. All this, everlastingly true and basic, we take for granted. Religion is primary, the Church is subordinate. But subordinate does not mean unimportant or non-essential; and the effective minister is the one who assumes that his function as the leader of the worship and prayer and thought of the assembled congregation is one of the supremely important services which a man can render to God and to fellow-men.

It is not wholly surprising, however deplorable, that the importance and basic value of the minister's function should have become obscure to some people. The Church has been passing from an undifferentiated to a specialized life, and in the process has been relieved of many functions that once constituted its most obvious and seemingly practical activities. Indeed, so important and so practical and so absorbingly interesting are those activities that many find it difficult

to realize that any important function remains after they are gone. Once the Church governed politically. It does not now in America, and will not eventually elsewhere. Once it controlled the schools. It does not now, except under increasing protest. Once it administered the charities. Now, while it still engages, and ought to engage, in much charitable work, more and more the institutional charities and many forms of personal charities have organized for themselves. Once the Church was pre-eminently the social centre of the community. It is not now in the cities and not as much as it might well be in the villages. No longer can the sermon expect to provide exclusively intellectual sustenance to people surfeited with speeches, essays, lectures, and reviews. Even the tender ministries to the sick, the sorrowing, the disheartened, and the dying are no longer monopolized by the minister or his church associates. The visitor from the lodge not infrequently comes in as he goes out; and even the solemn service for the dead, traditionally his peculiar prerogative, he often shares with the lay representatives of the fraternal order, who read their burial ritual over the body of their friend. Is it any wonder that some people, even some ministers, bewilderingly ask if any service is left for the Church to perform? Is it any wonder that they sometimes endeavor to re-annex some forfeited region of human service where they once spoke the decisive and authoritative word? Is it any wonder that they sometimes strive to become the official champions of some needed ministration, be it economic reconstruction or psycho-therapeutics, not merely for the service they can render, but that they may thereby indicate afresh the practical usefulness of the Church

and justify themselves anew in their own sight? Or is it any wonder that some earnest and optimistic souls have concluded that the Church is outgrown, that Christianity needs no specific institutional embodiment, that Humanity is the only needed temple of God, whose sole worship is brotherly love and whose sufficient ritual is social service?

For one, I am glad that the issue is forced. One of two conclusions is true: either the Church has become less of a necessity, or it has become more of a necessity than it was before; either the minister is being progressively relegated to the position of guardian of a decorative ecclesiastical tradition, or else he is being called more distinctively than ever before to serve at the very fountains of life. It is unspeakably pathetic that any minister should lack vision to perceive which conclusion is true. What is left for the Church and the minister to do? Nothing more nor less than the primary and everlasting business of the Church, the business that has always been the Church's interior reason for being even in the days of its multiform organic dominion, the reason that was never more imperative than now. I do not take time now to support the position that the power behind state and school and hospital, behind social brotherhood and industrial reform, is not self-originating, but flows from the ideals and sentiments which it is the peculiar business of the Church to evoke and conserve. But suppose that these practical forms of service have done their most perfect work. Men and women still remain. The old power of the world to tempt them remains. The old cravings for inward peace remain. Still the heart cries out, "Thou hast made us, O God, for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in thee." Still must men and

women decide whether they shall master their wealth or be belittled by it to the level of worldly pride; whether culture shall open avenues of usefulness or isolate its possessors in intellectual arrogance and self-sufficiency; whether personal goodness even shall be a consecrated instrument for service or a self-complacent claim for consideration by God and man.

It is to meet these inherent spiritual needs that the Church exists. It is to lead in such ministration that the minister is set. It is well for us ministers sometimes to learn from laymen to value our function more highly. I have read with great interest and increase of professional self-respect the answers of one hundred and fifty laymen to the question why they regularly attend church, as compiled by the secretary of the American Unitarian Association. Two of them seem particularly worth quoting:—

"I believe the Church to be the most potent instrumentality for good; that it stands for pure thinking and clean living (and much else); that for these reasons alone it should be supported loyally, not only by contributing money and by 'word of mouth,' but by the personal attendance and individual interest of every well-meaning man."

That emphasizes the duty. This one emphasizes the need:—

"This world is so much with us, the present and the material so force themselves on my attention, that I am in constant peril of becoming merged in the temporal and the transitory. The Church is designed to bring the spiritual and the eternal regularly and pointedly to my attention, and to assist in preserving to my consciousness the essential nature of man and his real place in the universe. The Church is the one great world organization for ideal ends."

Can any work be more important than to lead in meeting such needs? Can any position among the varied functions of society be more serviceable? It is no circumscribed or narrowly specialized task. Science, literature, art, history, politics, economics, industry,—these all furnish the material for the seer's interpretation of life and the speaking of the prophet's word. It is, for example, a matter of relatively small consequence whether the minister be a socialist or an individualist. It is a matter of very great consequence whether he have the spiritual insight and the moral courage to remind the advocate of private ownership that the private owner is the public foe when his protest against socialism is largely an attempt to divert attention from his own illicit purchase of private favors at public expense from officials of his own private creation, or to remind the socialist that public ownership means no public gain if the individuals composing that public are bent on exploiting each other for their own private advantage. Here, as everywhere, the minister's sacred business is so to speak for God that men may hear him speaking straight to themselves.

It is all part of the high privilege of leading men in the worship of God, not the worship of stirred emotions merely, but of a power to think God's thoughts and a purpose to serve God's will,—that all-pervasive worship which Emerson rated as invaluable: "What greater calamity can fall on a nation than the loss of its worship? Then all things go to decay. Genius leaves the temple to haunt the senate or the market. Literature becomes frivolous. Science is cold. The eye of youth is not lighted by the hope of other worlds, and age is without honor. Society lives to trifles, and, when men die, we do not mention them."

The privilege of leading men in this kind of worship of God is what the Church offers to its minister. A primary condition of power and efficiency in the ministry of the Liberal Church is that the minister believe in the ministry as an exalted opportunity for honorable leadership and incomparable service.

A further condition of success is that the minister be a man with a message. It is not enough that he have a report or a tradition of somebody else's message.

"Preaching," said Phillips Brooks in a notable statement, "is the communication of truth through personality." Power in the pulpit, then, is the power of a message in a man and a man in a message,—not one or the other singly, but the two interfused.

Preaching is not simply the communication of truth, however true it may be, and with whatever accuracy of thought and cogency of logic it may be communicated. Neither is preaching the mere influence of personality. Preaching power is the power of truth appropriated and personalized by a living soul, so that it is not only a truth, but *his* truth. It is the power of a personality subdued and transformed by indwelling truth. Of such a preacher people may say that they forget the man in the message, but it is because the message has absorbed power of command from the soul of the man through which it has come.

To insist that a preacher's message must be his own is not to insist that it has never come to other men. It may have come to thousands of other men, and yet be fresh and immediate and personal to him. Nor is it to say that one's message is a sort of mystical revelation to be regarded as a direct word of God as distinguished from the truth which one gains by ordinary processes of investigation and reflection. The

truth gained is all God's gift, however it may come. But this is to be noted, that to the preacher the distinctive truths of religion are first of all assumptions, postulates of life, not merely abstract theories. They present themselves in spiritual ideals, the sense of right, the recognition of a moral order and an unseen world. God is a postulate of the good life before he is a theological inference. It is his soul's insistent demand that God and goodness and the spiritual order must be true that constitutes the compelling message of the preacher. If his deliberate reflection convinces him that belief in eternal goodness is not true, even though it ought to be, of course he will not be a preacher. But neither will he be the preacher simply because his theology admits belief in the goodness of God to be valid, if his heart no longer demands what his intellect has confirmed. The compulsory character of truth as the voice of the living God is the preacher's message and calling.

It is often said to-day that the power of the pulpit has declined. Be that as it may, the more important fact to understand is that the function of the pulpit has changed. It is no longer to serve as the mouthpiece of authoritative voices speaking from without, in the book, the creed, or the sacred tradition: it is rather to serve as the quickener of authoritative voices speaking from within, in the reason and conscience and spiritual ideals. The preacher will gain little authority by quoting Isaiah on righteousness. He will have Isaiah's authority when he preaches out of Isaiah's passion for righteousness as his own. He will not persuade men to love their enemies merely by repeating Christ's commands: he may so persuade them when he makes Christ's faith and love speak

with authority in his own life. The day of spiritual authority has not passed: only the day has passed, or is passing, of external substitutes for the inward authority of God in the soul. The preacher who can so speak that men shall know that God's truth has spoken will have authority and power.

One more condition of success is that the minister of the Liberal Church understand that the primary business of the Liberal Church is at bottom the primary business of the Christian Church. That business is to carry on the constructive work which Jesus Christ began in Palestine many years ago. There are legitimate reasons why we are Unitarian or Universalist churches rather than Baptist or Methodist or Congregationalist or Episcopal churches. But what is of even greater importance is that our original reason for being as one body of churches is that a man named Jesus of Nazareth lived two thousand years ago, that God gave him a work of everlasting importance to do, that he could not finish it, and has handed it on as a sacred task to the generations that have followed. That work in its essentials is very simple. It is set forth in the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, the great parables, and in many an impressive teaching and incident. It is the work of persuading men to live as sons of God and brothers of each other. That is primary work of the Liberal Church: all else is incidental and subordinate. All our special histories and gifts are to justify themselves in the efficiency with which we perform our part of the common Christian work. Our primary reason for being is not that John Calvin denied the Fatherhood of God, but that Jesus of Nazareth affirmed it. Calvin, indeed, had come to sit on Jesus' throne; but the need of de-

throning Calvin and enthroning Jesus was the occasion only, not the cause, of the liberal affirmation. So far as our primary business is concerned, other churches might not exist: we are set to proclaim a message as if it had come down to us from Jesus the Christ through centuries that had never denied it. Our business is to get his business done.

For Jesus of Nazareth was a man with a definite business. That is the fundamental fact about him. He came to do a definite piece of work Here we go beneath all the traditional questions of his nature and office and authority and metaphysical significance,—questions that have diverted attention from the fact of basic importance. Think what you will about Christ's representative quality Godward or manward. Estimate variously, as you may, some of the details of his teaching. Insist, as you have a right to, that you believe in him because of his truth, not in his truth because of him: he will accept your loyalty on your own terms, only he is probably more interested in your loyalty than in your explanations of it. But these are all incidental and subordinate to the primary fact that Jesus was a man with a definite task, an objective, as truly as is the architect who plans a temple or the engineer who builds a bridge. To accomplish that task, he was glad to live: rather than desert it, he was willing to die. Teacher and leader of the ages, he has bequeathed his task to us of to-day,—to save the world, to set up the kingdom, to enthrone love, to establish righteousness, to make this old world the abiding-place of co-operation and service. That sets the task and the standard for all churches and ministers who bear Christ's name, whether they be orthodox or heterodox, conservative

or liberal, Trinitarian or Unitarian, Calvinist or Universalist. If we believe in his work, if we believe in him as the doer of it, if we will to apply the gospel to the lives of men, then are we about our primary business, which alone can justify our being or insure our lasting success.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

By Joseph H. Crooker

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By James T. Bixby

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the sum of .....dollars.

[No. 236]

REASONS FOR FAITH IN IMMORTALITY

BY

REV. THOMAS VAN NESS

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BOSTON
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25 BEACON STREET

American Unitarian Association

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IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

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REASONS FOR FAITH IN IMMORTALITY.

"I believe in the life everlasting."—*Creedal Statement.*
"Because I live, ye shall live also."—*Words of Jesus.*

I am often asked, "Why do you believe so firmly in immortality?" I do not know. I only know that my faith grows stronger the longer I live. It is hard to put into words the reason for that faith. I think it is an outgrowth of experience. Now and again, after a funeral, some sad and hopeless soul asks me, "Do you think my child survives?" "Do you believe my mother still lives?" "Do you feel sure that personal consciousness continues?" Such questions show me that evidences are desired, statements that will appeal to the mind as well as to the heart. In offering various reasons, I do so with no anticipation that any one of them, when taken separately, will prove personal identity beyond the grave: all of them combined cannot do that. What I do expect is that they will afford a reasonable groundwork for the hope of immortality, and bring renewed trust to those whose faith needs intellectual support.

The first reason I advance for my faith in immortality, or, more strictly speaking, for a belief in the continuance of soul, is:—

This is a world of order. In so far as we are able to trace it, this universe is a reasonable universe.

"Through the ages one increasing purpose runs." The waters pass from sea to cloud, and then by evaporation to rain and sea again; the leaf that drops in

autumn and is renewed in spring is placed upon the twig in a fixed and mathematical order; the trade winds blow with regularity; the flowers systematically and with almost human intelligence protect themselves from cold at night; the Gulf Stream methodically warms the northern and cools the southern ocean; an astronomer can predict to a nicety the passage of a star as it travels millions of miles in its orderly orbit. Disorder, lawlessness in the physical world, is unthinkable. It is an irrational order if men and women are created without any purpose or object, merely to live, then die,—it is irrational, I say, if in the course of time the whole human race is to be snuffed out and nothing remain either here or elsewhere of body or soul, while stars, worlds, and meteors keep on and on whirling and circling through space as though man never really existed.

Again, since this is a world of order, then

If ever there was a reason for human existence, there is a reason for that existence to continue. If there is any reason why a man should build a house, then there is surely a reason why he should not destroy it just when it is beginning to take shape and form. If there is any reason why a mechanic should put together an engine with power to move and drag great weights, then there is every reason why he should not tear the engine to pieces before its moving and pulling powers had been fairly tested If there is any reason why the earth should cool and life exhibit itself upon the earth, any purpose at all in the ice age giving away to a period of vegetation, and that to a condition favorable to the life of man, then there is every reason why the process should not suddenly be broken.

Do not misunderstand. I am not trying to prove

overmuch by this statement. What I do wish you to see clearly, as preliminary to further argument, is that a process once begun cannot end at a half-way point. Some sufficient reason for human existence there must be, some final result worthy of the long evolutionary process. That final result is not yet apparent. We see and know only partially completed products, not finalities, hence we are led to posit not only a continuance of the process, but of the product as well.

My third reason for belief in immortality is because I see everywhere in nature

An economy of product. Though it may seem, on superficial examination, that much is wasted, yet in reality nothing is ever really wasted. Every movement, every natural process, is arranged with a nice sense of adaptation, of means to ends. The cotton blown about so wastefully from the cotton-tree on the Colorado plains is precisely the element needed to enrich the soil; the carbon exhaled from human lungs as a waste is precisely the element needed for the plant; the water apparently lost to the earth by evaporation returns again in the form of snow or rain.

A physiologist whose studies had shown him the marvellous power of the eye, its delicacy and sensitiveness to impression, was deploring its ruin. "Think of it," he said, "an organ capable of appreciating light waves moving at the rate of millions of undulations a second and translating them into consciousness so that the mind gains the idea of the beauty hid in the lily and rose. Is it not wonderful?" If the loss of the eye seemed to this scientist something to be deplored, what shall we say of that waste, that prodigality, which would let perish the individuality that co-

ordinates. the very ego which unifies memory, aspirations, affections, into nobility of character?

If there is such waste, then the universe is robbed of the moral energy, the spiritual motives that existed in independent souls Yes, if one single righteous soul be snuffed out, it means the loss to the universe of a moral power which might be exercised by that soul forevermore.

Can the overruling wisdom be so economical of ammonia particles and so wasteful of the god-like element which unifies soul particles? Are molecules of oxygen, of carbon, of sodium, more important to preserve than the spirits, the personalities, of Socrates, Moses, Buddha, Paul, Jesus?

For myself I find it impossible to believe that the highest product of evolution is lost while the lower factors still continue.

I used the word "evolution" just now, which implies progress. Yes, from monad to man *there is a slow and orderly progress:* when man himself is reached, *the progress continues*, physically, mentally, spiritually, until at length come saints, apostles, martyrs, heroes, philanthropists, patriotic statesmen, unselfish citizens; but why talk of progress if it end nowhither? Why speak of a path, if it end nowhere? Why mention going onward, if one is simply travelling around and around and around in a circle?

> "Not enjoyment and not sorrow
> Is our destined end and way,
> But to live, that each to-morrow
> Finds us farther than to-day."

Farther along to what? The word "progress" has no meaning if the last term is nothingness, while the first term is life and activity.

Even to say that we are "absorbed into Deity," or reach "Nirvana," or become "one with God," does not meet the demand, for, after all, these phrases have but a hazy meaning, and those who use them seem to ignore the fact that evolution means specialization. Progress, we say, is from the general to the particular. The whole attempt of modern education is to develop the individual, to make strong and sure the personality of each. Is our educational system wrong? Does it go counter to the basic law of progress?

Take next *the universality of this belief* in a life beyond the grave.

Long before the story of Jesus' resurrection was known men believed in immortality. Indeed, so similar is the New Testament narrative to certain legends of the past that it might be imagined the Evangelists copied one or other of the stories already in existence.

> "Trust, ye saints, your God restored,
> Trust ye in your risen Lord;
> For the pains which he endured
> Our salvation have procured."

These words could be sung in a Christian church, as has been truly said; and yet they do not refer to Jesus, but to the ancient pagan God Adonis, worshipped in Syria under the name Tammuz.

Osiris in Egypt, Mithras in Persia, Krishna in India, Bacchus in Greece,—these all were great heroes who had risen from the dead. Whether we examine the beliefs of the lowest Indian or Malay tribe or those of the most enlightened European nation, we find everywhere, in all times, seasons, and places, a belief in survival after death.

How does it happen that, in spite of the evidence

of the senses, men have still persisted in thinking that within the cold and silent form, stiff in death, there was a something "able to overleap the black abyss and start on an endless career of light"? Can the thousands and thousands of men and women who so believed have been mistaken? Black, white, savage, civilized, African, European, American, ancient and modern,—are all these human beings mistaken? Does nature play so diabolical a trick with our deepest instincts?

If there is any wide meaning in the scientific doctrine of "*the survival of the fittest*," then here, surely, is a belief which must be classed under that head; for, though argument, ridicule, and all the evidence of the senses have been brought against it to show its falsity, it has persisted, nevertheless, in men's minds, and in some form or other is held tenaciously to-day. What shall we say, then? Is there here an exception to the general law? Rather let us say that the belief in immortality has continued and grown because it was most fit to survive.

A sixth reason for my belief in immortality is *because it is impossible really to destroy anything*. Scientists speak of the persistence of force, of the indestructibility of matter, of the conservation of energy. Yes, well and good; but how about that greatest force, mind-soul, which directs and masters all lesser forces? I cannot get myself to think that the clothes are more valuable than the man who fashions them, the book more immortal than the author, the poem more worthy to live than the poet. As I said before, I cannot get myself to think that sodium, lime, phosphate, are more worthy to exist than the ego which unifies thought, aspiration, personal consciousness, love. Can the

stars in the zodiac swing in their courses for sixty million years and more, and man, who is conscious of something within himself more valuable than sixty million constellations, die after sixty years of existence? The scientific doctrine of the indestructibility of matter and the persistence of force is absurd, if the mightiest force, that capable of controlling all other forces, is extinguished. "The assumption that the life ends with the body," says John Fiske, "is perhaps the most colossal instance of baseless assumption known to philosophy."

Seventh. I believe in immortality because of *the greatness of human nature.* Men and women all about me are demonstrating day by day the superiority of the soul over sense and the things of sense and time. "The mother content to give up her own desires, her reading, her social companions, for the sake of being absolutely faithful to her children, makes an hourly demonstration of the greatness of spirit." Every brave nurse wearing the Red Cross, content to risk her life in the service of people who are suffering from dreadful contagious diseases, "is making the high demonstration of the greatness of the spirit as contrasted with the feebleness of the body." Every volunteer ready to suffer wounds and pain for his country's sake exhibits a something which is more than a manifestation of mere brawn and muscle. Oh, the greatness and goodness of the human soul! Dorothy Dix, Clara Barton, John Howard, Father Damien,—is the expression of their divine unselfishness simply a product of earth? Oh, the grandeur of the human mind! Homer and Plato and Shakespeare and Tennyson,—they whose songs move us so mightily; Wesley and Mazzini, Victor Hugo and Channing,—they whose gospel incites

us to better living: these giant minds and souls, so great in thought, in act, in unselfishness, in love,—are they all, all, like a passing scene, to live again only in "hearts made nobler by their presence"? Do they mean nothing? Is it so? No, no, I cannot so believe. The very greatness of human nature prophesies something more enduring than the little span of years lived here on earth.

Eighth. *The incompleteness of Earthly Life.* Future life is a necessity, so that you and I and all the others who are striving, struggling, shall have a chance to attain, shall have a chance to grow into what we would like to be, shall have a chance to become more truly sons and daughters of the eternal God, after the manner of the stature of the fulness of the Christ. Earth life only opens our possibilities. Here is Shelley drowned in his thirtieth year, his great poem, "Life's Triumph," like a mockery left unfinished; here is William of Orange struck down by a dagger just when he can be most useful to Holland; here is our own loved Lincoln, his work of emancipation not yet completed, cut off by an assassin's bullet. Your son, your daughter, your wife, taken by death when life, like a rosebud, was just unfolding,—shall they have no opportunity to bloom? The very incompleteness of human life postulates another realm, another chance to put forth powers, feelings, talents, only partly used here and now. Shall that chance be denied?

Ninth. This incompleteness suggests *the latent possibilities in us all.* How little we know of one another! Only the surface side, the practical side, is known. The world is not interested in that part of your nature which is below the surface and cannot be put to prac-

tical use. For public ends there is but a small part of you that is utilizable,—only your business capacity, or your strength of muscle, or your eloquence as a speaker; but deep down in your heart you know there is more of you than that which has a chance to exhibit itself actively. You know, if you had the training or the leisure or the wealth, you could be a poet, a mechanical inventor, a musician, a sculptor. Well, so be it. What of it? Even though you live to be ninety, those latent faculties will never have the chance fully to develop. Surely it is irrational to suppose that Nature, the economical mother, observes in all other ways such a nice adaptation of means to ends, and yet so overfreights us with powers, talents, capacities, which can never be put to anything like their full use.

It is no answer to say that these longings, these latent capacities, often find expression in an after generation, as, for instance, the struggles to compose a musical symphony in a progenitor of Richard Wagner resulted in the "Tristan and Isolde," the desire to be a sculptor in some unknown Buonarotti developed in a Michael Angelo the power to carve real statues. Such an argument begs the question: for it does not follow that one's ideals are always worked out by his posterity, and it gives no valid reason why we are so often haunted with aspirations and purposes never to be made real. It also fails to take account of the fact that even a Wagner or an Angelo has latent possibilities never realized in the short span of earth life.

Tenth. I believe in immortality because the *most righteous souls in all times have so believed.*

Am I to disbelieve the astronomer concerning the

movement of the planets, and believe the commonest newsboy or bootblack on the same subject? Am I to think the experienced sea captain mistaken when he tells of ebb and flow, and yet believe the unlettered countryman who never even has seen the ocean? Is Edison to be set down as wrong when he tells of a force called electricity, and the Zuni Indian to be considered right when he tells of a lightning dragon? Nay; in this way we would impeach the credibility of our highest witnesses. Well, then, if this be so, am I to suppose that Whittier, Browning, Longfellow, Saint Francis, Saint Paul, and all the early Christians were befooled, while the Epicureans and dissipated Sybarites caught glimpses of the truth? Am I to be told that Nero, in his drunken carousals, rather than Jesus on the Mount of Calvary, is to be taken as infallible authority on so vital a subject as immortality?

Eleventh. I believe in the immortal life because *my inborn sense of justice requires, demands*, something more than earth life affords. I believe in justice. So do you. Is the idea a mere dream, a snare, a delusion?

The poet ushers us into the sleeping apartment of the pure and faithful Desdemona. We see Othello, mad with passionate jealousy, take her into his strong arms and strangle her. As her life goes out, we ask: "Is this all? Is she never to be exonerated? Is Iago to escape punishment? Will Othello never know the truth? Desdemonas there have been before and since Shakespeare's time. Are they one and all never to have justice done them?"

There is that splendid figure walking up the steps of the scaffold in Virginia, stopping first for a moment to kiss the lips of the little colored child that is held

before him. Then comes the rope, and—is it extinction forever? There are the gentle, well-born ladies, Perpetua and Blandina, thrown to the lions because of their faith. Were they mistaken? Was their faith in God vain? Were they "deceived," "betrayed"? Was every wind whispering, "The end, the end"? Did mocking demons look down upon the bloody arena, and grinningly exult at the triumph of superstitious cruelty and injustice? And he whom all the world remembers so joyfully on Easter. On Friday injustice and treachery had succeeded. Evil and force had triumphed. Why wonder at his momentary despair? Why wonder at that cry of agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"?

Was he forsaken? Was that the end? Will he never know? When he said, just as his great heart broke, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," was he hopelessly deceived?

. . . . . .

If we have obligations to God, God has equal obligations to us. If my child, in perfect trust and faith, puts his hand within mine in some moment of danger, then I, on my part, am bound to see him through the danger, if it be in my power. A man is indicted at the law for exciting expectations and holding out promises which he never expects to fulfil. Does God excite longings and hopes in the human heart, does he awaken beliefs which can mean nothing? Nay, so to think is to charge God at the bar of justice with a guilt blacker than that of the most ordinary of mortals.

Twelfth. I believe in the doctrine of immortality *because of its effect on human effort and character.*

The hope of immortality consoles the sorrowing, it comforts the bereaved, it brings calm to the troubled, anxious heart. It does more: *it helps to purify.* I knew a rather reckless man in the West who had a beautiful wife. Like a flower she was cut down one day, and passed from our view. That great, strong husband with quivering voice said, after the funeral, "I must be pure for her sake, for her sake."

"And every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself," saith the apostle. Yes, it is so. After our dear ones are gone, we feel that we must live worthy of them. We are shamed into nobler thoughts by the memory of them and of their love for us.

But why may we not know, actually know, as we know that two and two are four?

Because, if we did know in a precise and literal way, what chance would there be for us to show faith and trust in God? What does love imply? It implies faith and trust. Can you conceive of a woman falling in love with a man in whom she has no faith, in one she is not willing to trust? Can you suppose that a husband really loves his wife if he does not trust her, if he have no faith in her? A wife's character without this trust would be worth what? A soldier's loyalty for his country which can be maintained only by his country showing to the uttermost what it is willing to do for him in the way of pensions and invalid homes is not worth the having.

If we insist on devotion, on courage, on purity in those we love, if we especially ask from them faith and trust, shall God be satisfied with anything less in us?

God wishes us to love him. How can we show such love? Surely in no better way than in being willing to trust his laws, to have faith in his righteousness,

and to put ourselves entirely into his hands as does the bride who has undying confidence in the bridegroom, saying, "I trust thee for good or ill, in sickness and in health, in joy or sorrow, forever and forever." I am glad that God does thus ask me to trust him. I rejoice that he gives me the opportunity to show my faith in his goodness. More, I think it wise that immortality shall not be my unquestioned right, but a state of being to be attained by me through struggle and effort and righteous living. I know that sin is disintegration, but I feel equally assured that moral energy is an eternal force. When, therefore, Easter day comes, I can enter into all the joy and hope, and rejoice as I hear in the depths of my heart the grandly solemn yet joyful words of the apostle, "To die is gain."

. . . . . .

Flowers! speak to me this morning the same dear old lesson of immortality which you have been speaking to so many sorrowing souls.

Wise old book! let me read again in your pages the firm assurance that to die is gain. Poets! recite to me your verses which repeat in every line the gospel of eternal life. Singers! break forth once more into songs of joy, let me hear again the well-known resurrection psalm. Tree and blossom and bird and sea and sky and wind, whisper it, sound it afresh, warble it, echo it, let it throb and pulsate through every atom and particle; let the air be filled with it; let it be beaten into our brains, there to be told and retold and still retold until hope rises to conviction and conviction to certitude of knowledge, until we, like Paul, even though going to our death, go with triumphal

mien, with assured faith, with serene and shining face, able to say, I know in whom I have believed, for the which cause I suffer death, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep my soul which I have committed unto him even unto the end.

[No. 237]

THE BIBLE FROM THE LIBERAL CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW

BY

REV. J. A. CRUZAN

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

The American Unitarian Association was Founded in 1825 with the Following Expressed Purpose

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE BIBLE FROM THE LIBERAL CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW

I cannot hope to be original on a subject which has claimed the profoundest thought of the best brain of our church: I can only restate that with which you are familiar.

1. The intelligent Liberal Christian has rid himself entirely of Bibliolatry. He approaches and studies the Bible as he does any other book. He regards the Bible as literature, the winnowed, selected literature of the Jews, that "peculiar people" who had a genius for religion. He opens his Bible, and finds that it is not one book, but sixty-six small books, or pamphlets, written by unknown authors, in different languages, centuries apart. It purports to cover forty centuries of the life of the Jewish people. It includes the tribal and national myths, legends, history, biography, law, poetry, fiction, philosophy, and prophecy. The Liberal Christian studies the Bible as a great body of religious and ethical literature, as the spiritual biography of a nation, the product of a thousand years of hope and fear, and struggle and aspiration; and yet a perfectly natural human production, springing out of the human heart and life just as naturally as did the religious literature of other great peoples. He believes with Emerson:—

> "Out from the heart of nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old;
> The litanies of nations came,
> Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
> Up from the burning core below,—
> The canticles of love and woe."

2. Being an evolutionist, the Liberal Christian applies the principles of evolution in his study of the Bible. He finds in this marvellous collection of religious literature an imperfect but constantly "progressive revelation of the life of God in the soul of man." He sees that the race has grown, as the individual grows, in the knowledge of God and righteousness. The Liberal Christian does not believe that there was a perfect revelation at first, which man lost, and is gradually recovering. On the contrary, he finds, as he studies the Bible, that from the beginning there has been an increasing capacity to receive the truth, and therefore an increasing understanding of it.

We know that when man emerged from the jungle, and first stood erect, he began at a very low stage physically, ethically, morally. That mankind has made gradual, though by no means steady, progress in its knowledge of the arts and sciences, of the laws of health, of the conditions of social progress, of political organization, of commercial laws, no one questions. But these involve a knowledge of ethics or the laws of right and wrong, and are involved in a knowledge of God, since all life is a manifestation of him. It is as impossible to separate life into its constituent elements as to separate a river into its separate drops.

The man grows; one part is not instantly created, and another part left to grow gradually. So the race grows; one part is not instantly created, and another part left to grow gradually. In other words, conscience, reverence, faith, hope, and love are as subject to the laws of growth as the intellectual faculties or the social impulses. And only as these divine faculties

grow is a knowledge of the divine possible. It is as impossible to put the saint's knowledge of God into a savage by an instantaneous process as to put into him a scientist's knowledge of nature. The Liberal Christian, therefore, is not troubled because he finds errors in the Bible. He expects to find errors. They belong to the ignorance of the childhood of the race. He is not surprised that a people who believed that the earth was flat, that Palestine was the centre of it, and that it was covered by a metal "firmament" should imbed in their literature a cosmogony radically different from that given us by our twentieth-century science. He knows that the world was not made in six days; that there never was a universal flood; that the sun did not stand still in order to give a barbarous general time in which to complete the slaughter of his enemies; that the current of the turbulent Jordan did not "divide" for hours, while an army of six hundred thousand men passed through dry-shod; and that the walls of Jericho, that ancient Port Arthur, did not fall at the blast of rams' horns. When he finds these and many more things like them in the Bible, he does not believe them any more than he believes the traditions and myths which he finds in the literature of Egypt or India. He feels under no obligations to accept, or to justify, the low morality of the Jewish people when in their barbaric or semi-barbaric stage. Their slavery and polygamy, their cruel subjection of woman, the wars of extermination and the murder of women and children, the outrageous treatment of female captives, the treachery and cruelty of Jael, the spirit of vengeance and bloodthirstiness approved in the Book of Esther, the un-Christ-like spirit of the imprecatory Psalms,—these and other

moral blots may be explained by the age to which they belong; but no reason can justify them, and the Liberal Christian does not feel called upon to try to justify them.

And so in regard to the imperfect anthropomorphic picture of God which the early Jewish literature gives us: we do not accept it, because we know it was the ideal of a barbarous, ignorant people. A God who was jealous and angry, who hardened the heart of a heathen king, and then punished him because of it, who ordered the slaughter of all the Canaanites, who, because a king had taken a census, killed tens of thousands of his innocent subjects, who condones slavery, polygamy, theft, and lying,—such a God never had any existence save in the low barbaric animalism of those who worshipped him. They were like the God they created. The Liberal Christian demands a God better than himself. He says with Whittier,—

> "But nothing can be good in Him
> Which evil is in me.
> The wrong that pains my soul below
> I dare not throne above;
> I know not of his hate,—I know
> His goodness and his love."

The liberal Christian finds in the Bible a record of the slow, gradual manifestation of God to man; of the ascent of man in morals and in spiritual discernment; of his progress in the application of moral laws to social conditions; the constant rise of moral standards; the slow outgrowing of the old animalisms, cruelties, lusts; and, finally, the clear revelation of God as a loving father by the Nazarene carpenter. Jesus tells us that God is love; that love is the highest life;

that self-sacrifice is the supremest test of love. And so we find in this Bible the highest and clearest revelation of God's character in all the world's literature.

3. If the Bible is fallible, as we have just seen that it is, it follows that the Liberal Christian does not regard it as the ultimate authority. What is the final court of appeal to which all questions must be brought for decision? The Catholic says, "The Church." The orthodox Protestant says, "The infallible Bible." But the Liberal Christian holds that all questions of right and wrong, of revelation and inspiration, even the Bible itself, must be brought to the bar of the supreme court of man's conscience and reason.

We believe with Jesus that, "if a man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine"; "that, if a man will live the truth," the truth shall make him free; that the Holy Spirit will lead the sons of God into all truth. As Dr. Pearson puts it, "Every message from heaven comes to us colored and shaped and limited by some man's personality, and must be discarded, or altered, or supplemented according to the new knowledge and the new needs of men. *Vox populi, vox Dei.* Humanity is the great ecumenical council. The race is greater than its greatest representatives. The religious consciousness of men, perennially quickened by the Divine Spirit, is forever testing every spiritual dogma and ideal, and is continually elevating the intellectual and moral standard of the race."

We listen with reverence to what the inspired men of Judea have to say to us, but we study their message in the white light of the twentieth century, and we do not hesitate to reject that in their message which shocks our conscience, conflicts with our experi-

ence, or is contrary to reason and common sense. We believe with George Eliot:—

> "Two angels guide
> The path of man, both aged and yet young,
> As angels are, ripening through endless years.
> On one he leans; some call her Memory,
> And some Tradition; and her voice is sweet,
> With deep, mysterious accords: the other,
> Floating above, holds down a lamp which streams
> A light divine and searching on the Earth,
> Compelling eyes and footsteps. Memory yields,
> Yet clings with loving cheek, and shines anew
> Reflecting all the rays of that bright lamp
> Our angel Reason holds. We had not walked
> But for Tradition; we walk evermore
> To higher paths, by brightening Reason's lamp."

4. The Liberal Christian claims a larger Bible than the collection of Jewish literature which is called by that name. He does not regard inspiration and revelation as exceptional and episodical phenomena. He refuses to believe that God left all of his children to grow up in ignorance of himself except a "chosen race" occupying a province no larger than the State of Vermont. He believes that inspiration and revelation are universal phenomena; that God has not left himself without witness among any people; that he has spoken in all lands, unveiled himself before all peoples, brooded all hearts; that God's light has flooded the earth from the beginning, shining into the hearts and brains of men just as fast and as far as those hearts and brains were capable of receiving it; that all men are God's children, all have been led of God, and each in his own way has been reaching out and finding God.

The Liberal Christian claims this larger, this world-

wide, age-long Bible as his own. He believes with Lowell—

> "All nations have their message from on high,
> Each the Messiah of some central thought,
> For the fulfilment and delight of man;
> One has to teach that Labor is divine;
> Another Freedom; and another Mind;
> And all that God is open-eyed and just,
> The happy centre and the calm heart of all."

This greater Bible is our heritage, and it is ever growing and enlarging. Science has written for us a new and better Genesis. In laboratory and study patient, persistent searchers after truth have written new and wonderful paragraphs of God's laws. Since the Jewish calendar of saints and prophets and seers and heroes was made up, history has been busy adding the names of other heroes, seers, prophets, and saints. As Dr. Savage says, "Humanity writes a new sentence in its Bible with every new step of its experience, with every new and larger contact with the universe in which it lives." The canon of this larger Bible can never be closed. As Emerson wrote, "With each new mind a new secret of nature transpires; nor can the Bible be closed until the last great man is born."

> "Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
> And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;
> Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
> Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan,
> While swings the sea, while mists the mountains shroud,
> While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
> Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit."

5. The intelligent Liberal Christian claims this larger Bible, but he does not undervalue or neglect this Hebrew Bible. In all the world's religious literature there is no other book like it. God speaks to us

in the Bible as in no other literature. Nations have their characteristics as well as individuals. The genius of the Hebrew nation was for religion, as the genius of Greece was for art, of Rome for law, and England for commerce. In the Bible we have the record of the growing knowledge of God and of truth, wrought out in the experience, in the lives, of that marvellous people. Here we have the best words of the holiest prophets of the most religious nation the world has ever seen. Here is the book that tells of Jesus of Nazareth, about his life, his teachings, his death,—a book which shows me the streams of regenerating influence beginning to flow out through the lives he vitalized, from the little land of Palestine to other nations; which reveals to me his star of empire taking its way westward, over the glad mountain tops of Syria and Asia Minor, through the classic lands of Greece, to the seven hills of the Eternal City,—a path of light that glows through the centuries, and shines more clearly in our own than any other; and in the clear light of our modern civilization stands this Nazarene Carpenter, the great central figure, the central force, of all that is highest and best. Here in this book alone do I have the record, and come in touch with the life of Jesus, the one ideal human life (I quote Dr. Savage), "a life in such a perfect relation with God, a life in such perfect relation with other men, a life that so bravely faced sorrow, a life that stood straight and strong in the presence of temptation, a life that rejected all the allurements of the world, a life superior to riches and poverty; a life that faced pain, that was true to truth at all costs; a life that did not shrink from death, that faced death down, looked through the shadow and caught the

light that is back of and beyond death, and tells us of immortality." Surely such a book is *the* Book. It should not lie unused and dust-covered on our tables, but be enshrined in our hearts. We should use it not to make a creed, but to enrich our life. We should make it not a substitute for thinking, but a stimulus to thought.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

A list of free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional and practical works, will be sent to all who apply.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Individuals desiring to co-operate with this Association may receive a certificate of Associate Membership by signing an application card (sent on request to the Associate Department) and the payment of one dollar. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars, the principal to be securely invested and the income to be used to promote the work of the Association.

[No. 238]

RESOURCES AGAINST DISCOURAGEMENT

BY

REV. MINOT O. SIMONS

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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RESOURCES AGAINST DISCOURAGEMENT.

As thy days, so shall thy strength be.—DEUT. xxxiii. 25.

This is a helpful conviction with which to face each day's experience. We have strength for the day. There is a rallying point within us about which our powers may gather and prevent defeat.

The rallying point may be pride. You may remember that Dickens portrays the spirit of the French nobility as they face the death decreed by the tribunal of the Revolution. Pride gives them strength. One young man gives way to the natural dismay at thus miserably ending his life, but a fellow-prisoner appeals to the spirit which he ought to display as a French noble, and his pride responds, and he walks forth with calm dignity to die like a gentleman.

Recently I read the experience of a yachting party on the Mediterranean. A sudden storm had come up and threatened to overwhelm the boat. One of the two women on board lost her head completely and seemed crazed by fear. Suddenly she cried out to the other woman sitting calmly beside her: "You know you are as frightened as I am. Why don't you show it, too?" "Oh, yes, I am frightened," replied the other woman, "for I know the danger we are in. But, if we are going to die, do let us at least die like ladies." And that appeal to pride wrought a complete change in the frightened woman, she became calm and even spoke words of encouragement to the others.

Pride is universally condemned. Yet there is a pride that may be most highly commended,—the pride

that shrinks from displaying weakness or ignoble character before others, the pride that insists upon courage and self-control when others can see, the pride that would stifle complaint. What would the gentleman do? What would the gentlewoman do? What would others commend? Such a pride is praiseworthy: we ought to cultivate it. Should I not be ashamed to become discouraged, to show the white feather, to confess weakness? Let this pride, then, become a resource against discouragement, a rallying point for our powers of defence.

Such powers of defence we must provide. The mood of discouragement is a dangerous mood. In it we are liable to do any sort of reckless thing. Discouragement is most terrible when it becomes despair, and each of us faces the possibility of being plunged into it. Unless we have the right kind of strength, the possible adversities of life may be too much for us.

The resources against discouragement must be deliberately and intelligently cultivated. I know people who, theoretically, deny the existence of pain, sorrow, and evil, but, when trouble came upon them as an actual existence, they were wholly unprepared and were carried away in confusion.

The fact is that trouble is never far off, and that fact should be recognized, not to dwell upon it, but to build up a strong defence against it. I have in mind what was said of a man who went down in unnecessary defeat. "He had not learned the arts of defence against adversity." These are what we need to learn,—the arts of defence against adversity.

Naturally, we turn first to outward resources. We think of our friends: perhaps they can help; or, at least, they can say the encouraging word that shall

arouse our own powers. It may be that we have a certain good pride to do all we can for ourselves first; but it may be that we have a false pride which would drive us to defeat before allowing our friends to help.

Friends want to help. I recall an old toast: "Here's to trouble! May it always chasten and never overwhelm us; our greatest bugbear and our best friend; it sifts our friends and unmasks our enemies." Blessed are the friends thus revealed by our troubles! They will not allow us to become discouraged. They challenge us to be worthy of their friendship. "Tell me the secret of your life," said Mrs. Browning to Charles Kingsley, "tell me, that I may make mine beautiful. too." And he replied, "I had a friend."

Again, work is an outward resource. Work helps one not to brood over his troubles. A happiness-destroyer and a bringer of discouragement is brooding. It exaggerates the trouble; it saps vitality; it shuts from sight the helpful and good things.

We must not brood: work necessitates enough light at least to work by, and, as one works, the light grows. A saving interest comes in what one is doing. When we are tempted into discouragement, we must keep busy. Depression passes; moods of discouragement do not last; nature is against them; and then the cause of the discouragement retreats farther and farther as time goes on. You may lose heart just when a little courage would save the day.

Friends and work,—these two at least may be outward resources; but the chief resources must be on the inside. The arts of defence must be applied by our own sturdy right will.

I have seen people discouraged simply because they

were tired out. I have seen people, like Harriet Martineau, who hoped for nothing beyond death simply because they had wearied of this life. But I think with Tennyson:—

> "Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
> No life that breathes with human breath
> Has ever truly long'd for death.
>
> "'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
> O life, not death, for which we pant;
> More life, and fuller, that I want."

It is really life that we want. If we are tired, we want rest; and if we realize that we are tired, and that we are tempted to let go and become disheartened because we are tired, then it becomes a duty to rest.

I know one tired and nerve-stricken individual who was advised by her doctor to read some of the Psalms every day. And it is easy to see that such advice was given, not because of some supernatural efficacy in reading from the Bible, but because, while reading from the Psalms, she was calm, quiet, and receptive.

The old prophet spoke from the deeps of wisdom when he said, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." "Don't waste your strength in impatience," as a friend of mine has expressed it. And such advice to the weary may save their souls. Get rested: that is a resource against discouragement. But one must have the teachable spirit that will use a simple resource when despondent. As Mr. Benson urges: "Yet would that the soul could gratefully recognize her own rainy days; could droop like nature with patient acquiescence, with wise passivity, till the wells of strength and freshness are restored!"

Again, hope is a mainstay of life. So long as a man

has hope, he is buoyed up; but, when hope is gone, he gravitates to despair. That is the bare outline of innumerable tragedies: each individual case supplies the details.

The resource, then, against the discouragement of hopelessness is to keep some hope, to find a hope, to will a hope. Certain cases of actual experience which have come to my notice lead me to think that that is always possible. There is always something to which we can fasten a hope; and I have seen some extreme cases of adversity.

Simply because discouragement is fatal, because we cannot bear the weight of a doubting or despondent heart, we must focus our life on something to hope for. That is the resource. We must will to find it and keep it; and then will come, as Merriman says, that "cheerfulness, born of a great courage."

I have recently read this story about an unhappy woman. She was, indeed, very miserable, and for years her complaints were loud and constant. But one day she happened to read of a naval disaster: the ship was doomed, but the officers set the band playing, the flags flying, and, dressed in full uniform with their white gloves on, waited for the ship to go down.

She thought of herself, and was ashamed. Never had she met disaster except with tears and complaints. "I won't be as I have been any more," she said to herself. "When troubles come to me, though I perish as those officers did, I will meet them as they did, with flags flying, the band playing, and my white gloves on." And new troubles came; but with each one she said to herself, "The flags must fly to-day, the band play, and I must have my white gloves on." And, if the trial were very severe, she would actually put

on her best clothes, and with smiling face go out to perform some act of cheerful kindness.

And after some years the result is that she seems to be happy and prosperous. People call her fortunate. Another complaining woman said to her, "Oh, it is well enough for you to talk, you who have never known a trouble in your life."

"A trouble in my life!" the cheerful woman said to herself, and stopped to think. "A trouble! Perhaps not; but now, thank God, those which I thought I had seem no longer to have belonged to me, but to some other person living centuries ago." And she felt sorry for her fretful friend.

Troubles come: we fail, and we get discouraged. In how many ways we can fail! We fail in our work, we fail in trying to do good, we fail in ourselves. Yet shall we get discouraged?

I have seen people discouraged even by the fear of failure, and because of that fear they failed; but a little courage would have prevented the failure. I like to remember the remark of a man which I believe explained the secret of his strength. There was "something within me that would not down, that would not accept defeat." Let us arouse that something in ourselves. We have it, that something that will not be downed, that will not be discouraged. We may not have realized our ideals, but we have done something. Let it count for so much. Have we failed in helping people? But we have tried. Let it count for so much. Without doubt we have helped them more than we think. We need not be discouraged about ourselves, for they may be partly to blame. We need not be discouraged about them, for we may be partly to blame.

And we can learn something for the future. I doubt if there were ever a failure in which we could not gather up a few things gained. Make the most of them and keep the face to the front.

> "Let's all be good and trim our sails
> And hold our courses true;
> For never mind what mischief ails,
> Unless the human factor fails,
> The old God-fearing grit avails
> To pull the patient through."

Why make a bad matter worse by letting go in discouragement? You have the power within you to be unbeaten. Turn on the power; or, better, order the flags out, set the band playing, and put on your white gloves.

We are most bitterly discouraged about ourselves if we have sinned. The memory of a single folly, a single great wrong, casts one down into the depths. But such despondency is not a bad thing, if one remembers that it is always possible to get out and to go back.

What of the sin? There is no reasonable expectation that our sins, even the greatest, are eternally unpardonable. I do not see that the universe is so ordered that a wrong can permanently remove one from the hope of forgiveness. A good God does not punish vindictively. Moreover, we punish ourselves. And, when we are thus punished, we ourselves can make the move for recovery. Are we in the depths of remorse? That very fact may be the first move toward redemption. Do we long to get out of those depths? We can get out; we can follow the change of heart in goodness, in atonement so far as possible, in aspiring to be right again in the sight of God; and, if we keep

that good heart within us, we shall surely enter the company of the faithful again.

A tree may be injured by the cut of an axe, but in time the fibres of the tree grow around and close up the cut, so that in after years it is hard to see where the cut was made. So we can, if we will, grow about our acts of folly and cover them up and present a life clean and healthy.

The great danger is in the discouragement of remorse; and in that discouragement men rush into new wrongs and the depths yawn still deeper. But somewhere, sometime, they must heed the call to repentance, and, in whatever far country they find themselves, there will always be a possible way home.

And, finally, dark discouragements come with our sorrows. What can we do with a trial so unescapable, a heart-breaking fact so unalterable?

Have we not the impulse to be noble even in our sorrows? We can make something of that. Have we not a trust in the good God who will not suffer us to lose permanently anything we absolutely need? We can make something of that. If we do not have such a trust, we can try to attain it. Others whom we have known have waited upon the Lord and have renewed their strength. We, too, can open our hearts to the Great Heart. Then, as some one has said, "God seems so great, in a hovering sense, like a pair of wings."

A resource against discouragement is a religious trust: it is not something to be acquired ready-made. It must be cultivated, and it can be cultivated. "Ye shall find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

Moreover, we can take a certain attitude toward the

change in life that has come through grief which will deprive it of its power to discourage. We can frankly recognize that a change has come which must be faced. Life cannot be as before. It is different. And it must be continued into the future on a new basis of service and consecration.

For instance, we can realize that death is in the divine order, and that sorrow comes to all. But the selfishness of grief! If we sorrow, our first impulse is to think: "Why do I suffer? Why has this come to me? No one was ever so hurt as I!" But we learn after a while that we are not exceptions: we realize that behind the courage and cheerfulness that meet us in other sorrowing hearts there is a grief as deep as ours. When we get behind the mask that other sorrowing people wear in the world, then we see the pain in the eyes, and we know that we are not alone in our grief. And, then, we are aroused to feel that we, too, must be brave and bear, that with a trouble so common we should be ashamed to give way, and by that very act help to make others still more unhappy.

And then, though we may sorrow, we have things to do. Think, for example, of the noble courage of President Harper. Here was a man of vigorous vitality, in the full power of his life and usefulness, who learned that his days were few. Imagine it! And remember how he faced this soon-coming death.

We feel that here was cause enough to break down the courage of the stoutest heart. Disappointment, sorrow, unfulfilment of life,—was he not discouraged? No, he was soon to die, but he seemed not to dwell on the fact. He did not quit his work. He did not say: "Why bother any more about it? I shall soon be no more."

On the contrary, he appeared to meet each day as an immortal soul would naturally meet it. He took the greatest interest in his work. Quietly and effectively he worked on, doing what he could to make his remaining strength of use. Was it pluck? Yes, and more. It was the quiet confidence that it were well to do the things that ought to be done, as things of human and divine significance.

And the world has said that it were well. The world would say it of us. For every one in sorrow there is always something that ought to be done, and in doing it the sharp pain is dulled. In a grief-stricken home each one by being brave can help all the others.

Thus is comfort won and discouragement prevented. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Troubles are brutal, they crowd upon us when we are down; but show them a brave face, and they hesitate or go around you. Go under, and the world is likely to let you stay under, but stand firm, and re-enforcements gather. The world and the gods love a brave man. Faith and confidence attract allies: the world is on the side of the brave, because the world is always inspired by the brave. An apostle of the courageous life writes:—

"You lose heart just at the point where courage would give you victory. Do not let the shadow of that dreadful life-weariness creep over you again. Command your forces with a mighty will! Rouse a brave mind! The power is yours, take it! You should carry yourself in the face of all opposition as though everything were ephemeral but yourself."

[No. 239]

THREE CENTURIES AND A HALF OF UNITARIANISM IN HUNGARY

BY

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

OUR FAITH

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD
THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS
SALVATION BY CHARACTER
THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND
ONWARD AND UPWARD FOREVER

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THREE CENTURIES AND A HALF OF UNITARIANISM IN HUNGARY.

Hungary should have a peculiar interest for Unitarians, for two reasons.

1. The name "Unitarian" had its origin there.

2. In Hungary is to be found the oldest existing body of organized Unitarian Christians. While the modern Unitarian movement cannot be said to have originated there, it is true that in Hungary it was first organized into an enduring church under the Unitarian name. This was in the period of the Protestant Reformation, soon after the death of Luther. Thus the Unitarian Church as such has had a history in Hungary fully three times as long as in any other land. What importance this fact gives to the study of Hungarian Unitarianism it is easy to see.

Where and what is Hungary? And who are the Hungarian people?

Hungary comes nearer than any other country to being the central land of Europe. It is off the main lines of travel for us in the West, and so is less known by us than most other European lands; but it is a large and interesting country, with an important history. It forms a part —the Eastern half —of the Austro-Hungarian (or Austrian and Hungarian) Empire; and yet, as a fact, it is a distinct and in most respects a self-governing Kingdom. It has an area fifteen times as great as Massachusetts, and contains nearly seven times as many inhabitants (about 20,000,000). Its capital city, Budapest, with nearly a million population, is one of the most enterprising and in every way finest cities of Europe.

Hungary is pre-eminently the land of the Danube, the greatest of European rivers outside of Russia. The vast plain of the Danube, of 40,000 square miles, one of the richest agricultural valleys in the world, lies within its borders.

In tracing the history of Unitarianism in Hungary, we often come upon the name "Transylvania." Where and what is Transylvania? It is a very picturesque and charming mountain region east of the great Danubian plain, indeed in the extreme east of the land. It is a little larger than Switzerland, and is often called the "Switzerland of Hungary." This region is of particular interest to Unitarians because here the Hungarian Unitarian movement was born, and here it has run its principal career.

Who are the Hungarians? And what has been their history? Several races are represented in Hungary. There is a German-speaking population of two millions,—an important element. There are nearly three million Wallachians, two million Slavs, half as many each of Croatians and Servians, and almost a million Jews. But the dominant race is the Magyar, who comprise nearly one-half the population, and the distinctly dominant language is the Magyar.

Who are the Magyars? They are one of the most remarkable races of Europe, endowed with a genius of their own, and possessing a vigor and strength surpassed by no other race. They are a people originally Asiatic, whose nearest kin in Europe are the Finns. A part of them claim to have come into Europe in the fifth century with Attila, the great leader of the Huns, the King Etzel of the Niebelungenlied, the "Scourge of God" of the Romans. These call themselves Szeklers. But the great body of the Magyars seem to have migrated from Western Siberia into what is now

Southern Russia in the ninth century, and a century later to have settled in their present abode. When they arrived in Hungary, they were a group of rude and warlike tribes, little disposed to a quiet life. They made marauding incursions into Italy and Germany, and were the terror of surrounding peoples. But, being defeated by the German kings, they settled down, and soon developed political institutions after Western models, and became an energetic, liberty-loving, proud-spirited, and important nation.

In the eleventh century they accepted Christianity. Situated in the very centre of the natural path of advance of the Ottoman Turks, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Hungary more than any other land became a breastwork to check the dread Moslem invasion. Again and again the tide of conquest was rolled back at the Hungarian border. If more than once it broke over the barrier, swept across Transylvania and Hungary, and stopped not until it reached the gates of Vienna, it was not because there was lack of Magyar valor. But the advance was only temporary. Austrians, Poles, and Germans helped the Hungarians to achieve the final victory, but the brunt of the long and terrible struggle was borne by the Hungarians. To John Hunyadi, the national hero of Hungary, more than to any other man (more even than to the heroic Sobieski of Poland), was Europe indebted for salvation from its awful dread of the Turk and of Islam,—a dread which for three hundred years, down to a time more than a century this side of Luther, hung like a black pall over all the countries between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean on the south and the British Channel and the Baltic on the north.

In Hungary the Protestant Reformation began

early. Indeed, a century before Luther, Jerome of Prague came from Bohemia into Hungary and preached with much success the heretical doctrines of Huss and John Wiclif. This prepared the way for the reception later of the doctrines of the great German reformer, so that, when Luther began his work, a portion of the people of Hungary were among the first to welcome his message.

In 1521 Matthew Devay, who had been a student of Luther at Wittemberg, preached Luther's doctrine in the Hungarian city of Buda. Soon there was similar preaching in other cities and towns. In 1529 Hermanstadt, in Transylvania, expelled the Roman Catholics. In 1530 Brassó declared for the Protestant faith. In 1540 Klausenberg (Kolozsvár), the Magyar capital, did the same. In 1544, two years before Luther's death, the whole "Saxon" (German) population of Transylvania, at the Synod of Medgyes, adopted the Lutheran (Augsburg) Confession. Queen Isabella, the wife of King John Zapolya, favored the Protestants, and in a few years the Reformation had obtained a decided ascendency in all Transylvania and Hungary. The first form of doctrine generally accepted was that of Luther. But a little later the "Reformed" doctrine of Calvin to a considerable extent supplanted the Lutheran, and became the more widely received of the two.

Meanwhile there was a decided tendency in many quarters toward forms of thought still more advanced and liberal than those of either Luther or Calvin. Indeed, in nearly all the churches there were men who were beginning to doubt the Trinity, and to demand a more rational interpretation of the Bible than any form of orthodoxy allowed. This could have pro-

duced little in the way of outward results, had it not been for the occurrence of an event of great importance. In the year 1568 a royal edict was issued in Transylvania, granting freedom of conscience, speech, and worship to all the people. This created conditions favorable for the liberal cause.

It is difficult to tell who were the first promulgators of the new faith. Stancaro, an Italian, sowed some early and fruitful seed. In the year 1558 Thomas Aran, a Hungarian, wrote a book denying the doctrine of the Trinity. The earliest advocates of Unitarianism of much prominence were Blandrata* and Francis David.

Blandrata was an Italian physician, who, being compelled to leave Italy on account of his anti-Trinitarian views, had gone to Switzerland and then to Poland. In 1563 he came from Poland to Transylvania, where he was made physician-in-ordinary to the king, John Sigismund. He seems to have been a man of some intellectual brilliancy and of considerable persuasive power, and under his influence the king, the king's mother (Queen Isabella), and many nobles accepted the Unitarian faith.

About the same time, or a little earlier, Francis David began his work. David was one of the great men of the Reformation period, whose high qualities and important service to religion the world has been too long in finding out. He was in early life a Roman Catholic, but of a liberal type, as is seen by the fact that he went to Wittemberg, Luther's university, for three years of study. After his studies were completed, he remained for a time in the mother church as a country schoolmaster or curate. But neither the Catholic Church nor an obscure station could long

* Or Biandrata: there is authority for both spellings.

retain a man with his great abilities, open mind, love of truth, and courage. Soon he identified himself with the Protestant faith, and became a preacher of the same in the capital city of the kingdom. Here he drew great multitudes to his ministry, and swayed the leading minds of the city and the nation by his eloquence. The Calvinistic churches made him their bishop. In addition to his pulpit work he gave great attention to education, and erelong was placed at the head of the college in Kolozsvár. Thus every year his influence grew more powerful and wide-reaching.

In 1566 he took another step forward. He had become convinced of the truth of the Unitarian view, and from that time on he devoted himself to its advocacy by tongue and pen. The public effect of his change was very great. The Unitarian churches made him their bishop. Aided by the influence of the king and many of the nobles, the liberal cause advanced with amazing rapidity. It has been said that, when David changed to the Unitarian faith, Kolozsvár and all Transylvania changed with him. Of course this is an extravagant statement, but it is true that in a very few years the new faith had become the dominant religion of the country,—a position which it held for nearly half a century.

For ten years after he became bishop, David led the Unitarian movement with great success, directing its development, moulding its thought and life, inspiring it with zeal, courage, and consecration, extending its influence and power, and then—a great tragedy came. A controversy arose over the question as to whether Christ ought to be made in any sense an object of worship. All agreed that he was not God, and ought not to be worshipped as God. But, since he

was regarded by all as a very exalted being, the prevailing custom had been to render to him a sort of subordinate worship, much like that which in the Catholic Church is rendered to Mary. At first David assented to this; but later he grew to feel that it was wrong, and condemned it. As a result, opposition sprang up, led by Blandrata. When Blandrata found that he himself could effect nothing, he sent to Poland, to Socinus, the most influential leader there, and brought him to labor with David. But David could not be moved, even by Socinus. The controversy deepened and grew bitter. At last articles were drawn up accusing David of innovation of doctrine, and on the basis of this accusation demanding his condemnation. King John Sigismund, the Unitarian, was now dead, and a Roman Catholic ruled in his place. David was condemned to imprisonment for life. Five months later he died in the dungeon at Deva to which he had been committed. In this tragic fashion ended the career of Francis David, the Luther, or, better, the Channing, of Hungary. The party headed by Blandrata triumphed, but it was only for a time. Later the view maintained by David was accepted by the whole Unitarian body, and he who was driven by them to a martyr's death is to-day their beloved saint and honored hero.*

The period of rapid growth and greatest prosperity of the Unitarian movement in Hungary came to an end with the death of Francis David, in the year 1579. However, the churches held their own fairly well for

* The Hungarian Unitarians are planning to celebrate in a very marked manner the four hundredth birthday of David, in the year 1910. It is expected that a new popular life of the great preacher and leader, by Professor Boros, dean of the Unitarian Theological College at Kolozsvár, will be published at that time.

a generation longer. But difficulties began more and more to confront them. Rome determined to win back what she had lost. She employed all possible political and ecclesiastical agencies to this end. The Jesuits were her everywhere energetic, unscrupulous, and efficient tools. The powerful House of the Hapsburgs, which ruled in Austria, and after 1687 held possession of the crown of Hungary, was her willing servant. A period of repression and persecution set in, which continued, with only brief intervals of respite, for two centuries. The Lutheran and Calvinistic churches suffered as well as the Unitarians, though to nothing like the same extent; and too often they were found joining hands with Rome against the more liberal movement, which they all alike feared and hated.

Sixty churches were taken from the Unitarians and given to the Calvinists at one time. In 1693 the Unitarians of Klausenberg (Kolozsvár) were deprived of their schools. In 1716 their cathedral was seized. In 1721 the large church in Torda was taken. These were only a few of the injustices which they suffered. Not only were they forcibly expelled from their places of worship and schools, but they were robbed of the houses and lands with which their schools were endowed. Their printing-presses were closed, and the publication of their books was prohibited. And, finally, all public offices were forbidden to them. Of course, the object of this was to deprive the Unitarian churches everywhere of men of standing and influence, and keep all persons of ability and ambition from joining them. These efforts to crush and exterminate the Unitarian movement went on for two centuries. A full history of the wrongs and sufferings inflicted upon

the Protestants of Hungary during the reign of Maria Theresa alone (1740–80) would fill volumes.

These things continued until 1791, when there was a change for the better. Ten years earlier, under Joseph II., there had been a show of reform, but it had amounted to nothing. But in 1791 a statute was enacted granting equal liberties and rights in Transylvania to the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinistic), and Unitarian Churches,—a statute which in 1848 was extended to all Hungary. With the enactment of this statute a new day of hope dawned for the Unitarians. True, the churches, schools, lands, and other property which had been taken from them were not restored, so that they were left still in extreme poverty. But it was much if from this time on they might have something of freedom and of equality with others before the law.

What had been the effects of the long period of persecution through which they had passed, extending from near the close of the sixteenth century to almost the end of the eighteenth? When the period began, there were in Transylvania and Hungary more than four hundred Unitarian churches, and thirteen high schools, and colleges. When it ended, all the colleges and high schools were gone but two, and the total number of Unitarian communicants was reduced to 32,000. It is a proof of their heroism, endurance, and unsurpassed devotion to their faith that any remnant of an organized Unitarian movement survived. But, few in numbers and impoverished as they were, when freedom was at last within their possession, they began at once, with courage and faith, the heavy task of rebuilding their churches and schools. The progress they have made from that time to this has been great.

We must not think, however, that even the last century has been without severe hardships for them. In the struggle of the Hungarian people against Austria for freedom and national independence in 1848–49, under the leadership of Kossuth, the sympathy of the Unitarians was with their own countrymen. As a result, when Austria, with the help of the savage hordes of Russia, had put down the uprising, the Unitarians suffered severely from the brutal soldiery, who sacked and burned many of their homes and villages, and murdered men, women, and children without mercy.

The poverty to which the Unitarians were reduced was very great. Their bishop received less than $260 a year; professors in colleges,—learned and able men, —$150 a year; and pastors of the largest churches, from $240 down to $125, and even lower; and all this while greatly increased pay, honors, and advancement were offered them if they would only enter the church favored by the government.

But even this was not the worst. In the year 1857 the poverty of the Unitarians was made a pretext for taking away their educational institutions. They were required to raise a sum of money which was believed to be altogether beyond their ability, for the purpose of increasing the equipment of their schools, or else they must surrender them,—which meant their coming under the control of the Roman Catholics. Think of Unitarian schools controlled by Jesuits,—"the very source of the country's freedom and moral life in the hands of the worst enemies of freedom that the modern world has known." A cry of pain and terror arose in the land, and in every Unitarian church and home was the word spoken, "It must not be, it shall not be."

These heroic and devoted men and women mortgaged their lands; those who had savings gave them; those who could earn anything, however little, earned it and gave. The poor gave; and the rich? They had no rich! But they raised nearly $67,000, a sum which has been declared to have cost them greater sacrifices than a million would have cost the Unitarians of America or England.

But even this sum was not enough. Still they would have lost their schools, had not the Unitarians of England come to their rescue. An English Unitarian living in Hungary appealed to his brethren at home in their behalf. The matter was taken up earnestly by Rev. Edward Tagart, secretary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and others, and the sum of $10,000 was raised, which Mr. Tagart carried personally to Hungary (1858). This effort of the English Unitarians saved the schools. It is easy to understand how deep was the gratitude of the Unitarians of Hungary to their English brethren for what they had done.

The Hungarian Unitarians now number nearly or quite 80,000. They have 112 fully organized churches with settled pastors, besides some 50 associated churches and missions. These are mostly in Transylvania: indeed only since 1848 have the preaching of Unitarianism and the organization of its adherents into churches been permitted in other parts of Hungary. But within a few years past societies have been established in the national capital, Budapest, and vicinity, and in several other localities.

The Hungarian Unitarians have always been deeply interested in education. From the Reformation down to the present day their practice has been to have a

school in connection with each congregation. To-day, in addition to these elementary schools, they have three colleges for literary and scientific study, and one theological school for the training of their ministers. Many eminent scholars and writers, preachers, public men, and leaders in the best thought and life of Hungary are in their ranks. They publish much Unitarian literature,—hymn and prayer-books, tracts, sermons, etc. They also publish four periodicals, *The Christian Seed Sower*, *The Unitarian Magazine*, *The Unitarian Church*, and *The Woman's World.*

It seems a little strange to us, who have always associated Unitarianism with a congregational or democratic form of church government, to learn that the Hungarian churches have a bishop. We have found them electing Francis David as their first bishop. From his day to the present the bishop's office has been continued. Their present bishop is Joseph Ferencz, a man of very superior qualifications for his important position, honored and beloved by all who know him, and said to be one of the three most eloquent preachers in Hungary. The legal title "bishop" is employed by the Unitarians to indicate that their church has equal rights with the other churches; but the bishop is really a superintendent of the churches, inducted into his office by a form of solemn oath-taking, but with no ecclesiastical ceremony, and going among the churches, not to lord it over them, but to be the sympathetic adviser, friend, and helper of all.

The churches are governed by a "consistory," in which there is a large representation of laymen. The consistory meets annually, and once in four years there is a synod. At these meetings there are two presiding officers, the bishop and a layman. While

the general organization of the churches is slightly less democratic than we of the West prefer, it is elastic, it is very efficient, and it appears to be in vital touch with the people.

Mention has been made of the generous help extended by the Unitarians of England to their Hungarian brethren in the years 1857 and 1858, when the schools of the latter were in danger. It may be recalled in this connection that there was a pathetic interest added to the visit of Mr. Tagart to Hungary, by the fact that he never reached home, but died on his return journey. Since that event the relations of the churches of the two countries have been of the most cordial and intimate character. England's first benefaction was not her last. She has continued to lend a helping hand to Hungary's needs in various ways, financial and other.

Mr. Tagart's visit has been followed by many others, some of the better known of the visitors having been Rev. S. A. Steinthal, of Manchester; Rev. J. J. Tayler, principal of Manchester New College; Rev. Alexander Gordon; Sir James Clarke Lawrence; Rev. Henry Ireson, secretary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association; Rev. Vance Smith; and in 1901 a party of twenty-seven persons, —seventeen gentlemen, seven of whom were ministers, and ten ladies, the leader of the party being Miss M. L. Tagart, daughter of the man who forty-three years before lost his life in the service of his Hungarian brethren. Many of these visits have been in connection with important events in the history of Hungarian Unitarianism, as the celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the death of Francis David, the opening of the fine new college building in Kolozsvár, and the dedication

of the new church in the national capital. Most of the visitors made more or less extended tours through Transylvania and other parts of Hungary, visiting important places, and everywhere being received with demonstrations of highest regard and warmest welcome.

Soon after the death of Mr. Tagart a scholarship was established in his honor by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, with the object of bringing Hungarian students to England to receive, free of expense, advanced theological training at Manchester New College, London (now Manchester College, Oxford). By means of this scholarship, which came into operation in 1860, sixteen different Hungarian students have already been enabled to take a course of two or three years each in the college. The results have been the very best. These young men have gone back to their own land to do a far larger and more influential work as pastors, preachers, educators, and public leaders than would have been possible except for their invaluable years in London and Oxford.

Good deeds always tend to create other good deeds. In 1892 Miss Emily Sharpe, seeing the excellent results of this Hungarian scholarship for young men, decided to do something similar for young women. The result was an arrangement whereby a succession of Hungarian young lady students might be maintained at the Channing House High School for Girls in London, each student to remain two years, and then to be followed by a successor. A number of young ladies have already enjoyed the benefit of this course of training, to the great satisfaction of all concerned. It is a beautiful form of help extended by one of the most generous of London's Unitarian women to her sisters in a distant land.

For many years the relations between the Unitarians of Hungary and those of America have been intimate. These relations began as far back as the year 1832, when a Hungarian Unitarian layman, Mr. Alexander Bölön, travelled in this country, and formed the acquaintance of many representative American Unitarians. On returning to Hungary, he carried with him some Unitarian literature, and reported in a very kind and appreciative spirit to his brethren there regarding what he had seen and learned here. Most important of all, he published a book giving an account of his American travels. The volume was read with great interest in all parts of Hungary, and everywhere created a favorable impression regarding this country. In 1882 Professor John Kovacs, of the Theological College in Kolozsvár, visited America, spending six months here, attending the National Unitarian Conference at Saratoga, and preaching and lecturing extensively. In 1900 Professor George Boros, of the same college, followed the example of Professor Kovacs, and at a meeting called in Boston assisted in the organization of the International Council of Liberal Thinkers and Workers. Rev. Nicolas Jozan, of Budapest, represented the Hungarian Unitarians at the meeting of the same International Council (Congress) held in Boston in 1907. After the Boston meeting was over, Mr. Jozan spent some weeks in visiting and looking after the religious welfare of Hungarian Unitarians who have migrated to America and are now permanently located in small and much-scattered groups in various parts of the East and the Central West. He estimated that the number of these was not less than 1,000, and invited the attention of American Unitarians to them with the hope that missionary and fraternal efforts might be put forth in their behalf.

American Unitarians are much indebted to Mr. John Fretwell, of England, for information about Hungary and Hungarian Unitarianism, given at various times, through addresses at conferences and elsewhere, published pamphlets, and articles contributed to the *Christian Register* and other periodicals.

Many American Unitarians have visited Hungary, among them being Rev. C. H. A. Dall, Dr. Edward Everett Hale, Rev. Robert S. Morison, Rev. J. H. Allen, Rev. S. J. Barrows, Rev. W. H. Lyon, Dr. J. T. Bixby, and Rev. T. C. Williams. The latest visitor was Rev. Charles E. St. John, in 1905. America has also shown an interest in Hungary in still more substantial ways. The American Unitarian Association has appropriated money for the publication of Channing's Works in the Hungarian language, and otherwise has furnished considerable financial aid to the practical work of the Hungarian Unitarians. Most important of all, Americans have endowed two professorships in the College of Kolozsvár, one of these in honor of Channing, the money being furnished through the American Unitarian Association,* and the other, the "Anna Richmond Professorship," established by Mrs. Richmond, of Providence, R.I.

The people of America will never forget how deeply they were stirred by the visit of Kossuth to this country, and by the story of the heroic struggle for political liberty made by the Hungarian people under his leadership. But the Protestants of Hungary, especially the Unitarians, have carried on a struggle for religious liberty quite as heroic, and not for a few brief months only, but ever since the time of Francis David in the

* This endowment is not complete: it has not yet reached the sum necessary to cover the expenses of a professor.

sixteenth century. We may well regard it as a privilege and an honor to be brought into fraternal relations with such a people; and, if in any way we have been able to give them help in their times of need, we may well be grateful. Such benefaction

"is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

I have said that the Unitarian name originated in Hungary. When and how?

1. The name appears for the first time as the recognized title of a religious body in the year 1568. If we may trust Peter Bod, the Transylvanian historian, the circumstances were as follows: In 1557 the Diet of Thorda in Transylvania passed an edict (ratified in 1563) granting universal freedom of worship. About the same time, perhaps as a result of the edict, the various religious bodies of the land united together for purposes of toleration, formed a league or union of toleration, pledging themselves not to persecute or trouble one another. Those who thus united or entered into this union were called "The United," or "Unitarians." Thus the name seems at first to have signified simply fraternity or unity, and to have had no reference to any theological belief. But the union formed did not long continue. Those who asserted the doctrine of the Trinity soon withdrew; and, because their withdrawal was on account of their belief, they were called "Trinitarians," while those who remained (such as accepted the Unity of God, but not the Trinity) retained the original name, "Unitarians," and voluntarily adopted it as their own.*

* "Historia Hungarorum Ecclesiastica," Book II., ch. xvi., p. 413. Bod was a learned ecclesiastical writer, and in most respects his history is regarded as a standard, though it contains recognized defects. In fairness

2. In 1600 the term "Unitarian," without the suffix (in adjective form, *unitaria religio*), first appears in a decree of the Transylvania Diet at Szekfalva, October 25.

3. In 1638 the word "Unitarian" was ratified by the Transylvanian Unitarians as the official designation of their church, and soon thereafter came into general use in Transylvania and all Hungary. All employment of the name in countries outside of these is much later.

The Unitarian movement in Hungary is of peculiar interest because it has had so extended a history. In England and America (the only other countries in which there is any considerable body of churches bearing the Unitarian name) the movement is of recent origin. In Hungary it has existed long enough to reveal its real nature. How has it stood the long test of three hundred and fifty years? What kind of fruit has it borne? In large part the answers to these questions are already before us, but a few further words may be added.

From its beginning the Unitarian movement in Hungary has allied itself with intelligence and knowledge, with progress and enlightenment. It has fostered education. Its schools have always been among the best.

It has always been on the side of both political and spiritual freedom. It has led in the long struggle for religious toleration. It has advocated and demanded

it should be pointed out that he was a Calvinist, and very hostile to the Unitarians; and his statements are not always trusted by the Unitarians of Hungary. Regarding his explanation given above as to the origin of the Unitarian name, Professor Boros writes: "No confirmation of it can be found from Unitarian sources. However, since it is certain that Francis David tried to unite all the Magyar denominations, in this sense [at least] the explanation given by Bod has some historic foundation."

liberty of conscience. Even when it had power in its hand, as it did in the latter part of the sixteenth century, it did not persecute, nor did it declare the supremacy or dominance of its own belief over the beliefs of others, but it granted equal liberty to all.*

There is no better test of a religion than the moral influence which it exerts, the character that it produces in its adherents, the manhood and womanhood that it creates. Unitarianism in Hungary invites the application of this test. Charles Loring Brace, in his book, "Hungary in 1851," written after a careful study of the country and its people, speaks with especial admiration of the high character of the Unitarians. He remarks upon the exceptional purity of their home life, and the almost total absence of crime among them, and points out that, while all around them 75 per cent. of the people can neither read nor write, among the Unitarian part of the population there is surprisingly little illiteracy. The Unitarians have been well described as "a brave, energetic, temperate people, still worthy of the praise which the old chronicler gave, that they are stricter in their morals than other Hungarians." One historian records that a Roman Catholic priest, writing to the government in Vienna against the Unitarians, was honest enough to confess their virtue and high character, but asked to have them repressed on the ground that "their good lives were a recommendation of their detestable doctrines, and a standing reproach to the impure lives of the Catholic priesthood."

* It will interest many ministers and others to know that the American Unitarian Association has been put in possession of a set of stereopticon slides (the donation of Mr. John Fretwell), illustrating the history of Unitarianism in Hungary. These slides will be loaned free for lecture or study-class purposes to any persons desiring to make use of them.

We sometimes hear it declared that the Unitarian faith is wanting in power to create enthusiasm, consecration, self-sacrifice, heroism. What has Hungary to say to this? Its long history denies the declaration. It shows that this faith has been the unfailing creator of the noblest possible of enthusiasms, self-sacrifices, and heroisms. It has carried thousands of men and women unfalteringly through the severest possible hardships, and sufferings, often including the loss of life itself.

It is sometimes said that the Unitarian faith does not reach the heart, and lacks power to create a deep and rich piety. The very opposite of this has proved to be true in Hungary. Through all its history the piety which it has inspired has been warm, earnest, and living. And it has not been a mere Sunday piety, but one active all the week. In many Unitarian churches of Transylvania not a single day has passed for three centuries without its public service of prayer and praise. And in the farming districts it is common for the church bells to ring at five or even four o'clock on summer mornings, even when work is most pressing, to call the people to their places of worship for a prayer and a hymn before going forth to the labors of the day. The Unitarians of Hungary have produced an extensive and rich devotional literature, and this literature finds considerable circulation and use among religious communions outside of their own. This tells the story. No people lacking in sincere and deep piety ever write the devotional literature of an age or a land.

Such, then, in brief, is the testimony which three centuries and more of history in Transylvania and Hungary have to offer as to the nature of Unitarian Christianity, and its power to bear the fruits of a high, pure, and noble religion.

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of Its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; price, $1.50 *net;* postage, 18 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post Office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT MAINTAINS (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT PUBLISHES (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT AIDS (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

IT ADMINISTERS endowments (1) for the benefit of schools and churches of the Unitarian order; (2) for the relief of poor and worthy ministers and the widows of ministers; (3) for educating young men for ministerial service; (4) for providing public lectures in centers of population; (5) for the benefit of schools for colored people in the South; and (6) for many other beneficent purposes.

IT UNITES the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

For the maintenance of these endeavors the Association depends upon the annual contributions of the churches and the friends of the cause. Contributions should be sent to the Treasurer of the Association at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

The Church of the Modern Spirit

by

PERHAPS you are not one of those for whom this booklet is written. Are you a member or attendant of a church whose statement of belief you can conscientiously accept? Do its services make you strong to do the work of life faithfully and meet its trials and temptations bravely? Does its religious message challenge the very best in you, stirring you ever to the performance of helpful service? Does it satisfy the demands of your reason, so that you can worship with your *mind*, as well as with your heart and soul? Does it command your loyalty by reason of its manifest worth and practical results? If so, then we may know that this booklet was not written for you. You may therefore lay it aside, or, if you kindly will, pass it on to some one less favorably situated than yourself.

For Whom Written

But if, on the other hand, you are not so situated, or if you have

ceased having interest in churches of any kind, you are invited to continue reading. Are you one of that large and increasing class of people who are out of touch and sympathy with the church, and who feel that it is not of vital value to them? Do you think that all churches to-day simply trade in outgrown traditions, and that none has a message that meets the demands of the modern time? Do you belong to that numerous class of people, who, though they never enter a church door, believe firmly in the reality of religion, and long for its expression and development in some kind of religious fellowship? If so, this booklet certainly *is* for you.

The Religious Crisis

It is very evident that we are in the midst of a great religious change and crisis to-day. Everywhere there are signs of uncertainty and unfaith in religion. The old beliefs that men once accepted without question are becoming more and more unbelievable.

Ancient creeds are being thrust aside by modern convictions. The new facts of science are shaking the old foundations of faith. It is an undeniable fact that the interpretations of religion that once attracted men, and held them loyal to the church institution, have for some reason lost their power. As a result of these new conditions, there are to-day thousands of people who have practically discarded the church.

A New Kind of Church

Now, this booklet is designed to tell you about a kind of church of which you are not a member or attendant, for the simple reason, perhaps, that you have not been aware of its existence and real character. It is one that recognizes all of these new facts and is not affected by them. It welcomes science as an ally of religion, and cheerfully accepts whatever of new truth it has to reveal. It is not pledged to affirm any particular creedal code. It only gains by every onward surge of evolution in human

thought. And the reason for this is found in the fact that it accepts and lays emphasis upon the greatest essential principles in religion,—the principles of freedom and progress. *It is a church upon the march with God and man!*

The Name

It is called the Unitarian church. At first the name represented a particular theological distinction. But at the present time, while that distinction still exists, the name has a much wider significance than before. It expresses and emphasizes the supremely important fact of unity, and its relation to life and religion. It stands for the unity of God, and the oneness of the deific power that creates and controls all. It stands for the unity of man and the oneness of all human life and interest in the bonds of a common birth and brotherhood. It stands for the unity of God and man, and the intimacy of relation existing between the Father and the members of his human family.

The Principle of Progress

In its acceptance of the principle of progress is the distinctive difference that marks it from all others. It maintains that true religion is just as progressive as science, or education, or life itself, and authorizes its members to have the courage of their convictions. It does not hold that there is any essential antagonism between the new and the true, but while it clings to the tested truths of the past, it looks ever for the later and larger truth. Accepting the doctrine of evolution, this new kind of church anticipates the inevitable changes that must come as humanity grows from religious babyhood to religious manhood. It is therefore ready to move on, keeping pace with human advancement.

The Rational Principle

First of all, the Unitarian church frankly accepts the rational principle in religion. It insists upon the right of a man's reason to reject whatever does not appeal to him as being true. Whenever there is a necessary

choice between a tradition received from the past and a truth perceived in the present, the latter is invariably accepted. One's own mind is the supreme court whose decisions must be taken as final. There can be no higher court. A man must be true to himself and to his own perception and conviction of truth. No sacred book or priesthood can overrule or displace a man's own thought of religious reality. His faith must be based upon his own rational finding.

The Larger Truth

There follows, therefore, the belief in the direct and daily revelation of truth. Truth and sunshine are alike. We are not dependent upon any reflected sunbeam of yesterday, but may receive the ray direct. If God reveals himself and his truth to any one in any age, he reveals himself to every one in every age. And in everything are God and truth revealed to-day. The Bible is a record of some of the revelations of the past, but every new day

brings its new message and fresh unfolding. Wherever true man speaks truly may be found a true prophet of God. Hence the Unitarian seeks and accepts the larger truth, the later Bible and the wider prophet-circle.

A Free Fellowship

The Unitarian church offers a perfectly free religious fellowship. There is not the slightest suggestion of any creedal compulsion. The doors swing open wide to all alike. If you wish to know the truth, and are willing to set prejudice aside in your search for it, you will find place and companionship in this church. You are at liberty to believe what you will, if you are but sincere in your belief and straightforward in its expression. It is a fellowship of the spirit, based not upon a common creed, but upon a common aim and a common method. In it you are absolutely free,— free to think your own thought, fashion your own belief, and to be true in every sense to yourself.

Unitarian Churches

Promote

"Religion, as an 'everlasting reality' and the consciousness of God as a necessity of the right life.

"Worship, as the natural aspiration of the human soul towards completeness.

"The pursuit of Truth as a safeguard from danger and a guarantee of freedom.

"The spirit of Sympathy and service, as the motive of social welfare, inspired by the gospel of peace on earth and goodwill to men.

"The reverent and joyful outlook upon life here and everywhere."

Some Affirmations

Some of its great affirmations, which cannot be fully stated here, are those of the reality of the living God, personal, protective, dominant in his world; the worth and divinity

of all men as the children and comrades of God; the inherent power of the lowest man to rise to heights of moral attainment; the sovereignty of the soul above all circumstance and evil; the revelation of truth in all inspiring words and books; the law of compensation, whereby every man reaps the full consequence of his every act; the authority of the moral sense, as revealing duty and right; the naturalness of religion, both as to its facts and its function; the right of reason to state the truth, in opposition to all received tradition; the unity of mankind as the one family of God.

Concerning Jesus

In the Unitarian church there is no dogmatic statement concerning the person of Jesus. As a result of the adoption of the rational principle, however, there is a practical agreement among Unitarians that Jesus was a purely human being, and not a superhuman deity. They love and reverence him as an inspired and inspiring leader in religious life, and one who revealed by the nobility of his

character the high attainments possible to us all. His life is regarded as the natural unfolding of the power and beauty inherent in human nature. This conception, as may be readily seen, is infinitely more helpful, more rational, and more stimulating than any other.

The Church Needed

The Unitarian church is essentially and peculiarly a democratic church. It stands for the principles which in the political realm are at the basis of all national liberty. Only a free church can rightly meet the demands and further the interests of a free people. Whatever in religion limits liberty and the right of self-perception is essentially undemocratic. To give our allegiance in religion to any person or time distant or foreign is to be untrue to the principles that underlie the structure and form the strength of a free people. No people can be truly or fully free until they are free in their religion. We must find the source of authority within ourselves, and not in anything

imported from abroad. And this need and requirement the Unitarian church fully meets.

What Great Men Said

Thomas Jefferson wrote, "I trust there is not a young man now in the United States who will not die a Unitarian."

Louis Kossuth, the great Hungarian liberator, said, "The Unitarian faith is the only faith which has a future; the only one that can influence the intelligent and interest the indifferent."

Abraham Lincoln said, "When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and with all my soul"

A Power House

The ideal of a Unitarian church is that it shall be a spiritual power house, generating the moral force

that shall later expend itself in the service of mankind. There is no thought of selfish benefit on the part of those who attend. The church simply presents to them an opportunity and a privilege,— of coming into more intimate and vital touch with the great spiritual forces of the universe, and so of becoming stronger to do the work of life. Its Sunday service is preparatory to the wider service outside. It aims to stimulate and stir to action. If a man does not leave its doors with the dominant idea of doing something for his fellows, its fundamental purpose is not accomplished.

On Spiritual Culture

The church is the only institution that deals with man in his true character as a spiritual being. It aims to develop that which alone shall survive. It is more essential than either the hospital where the bodies of men are cured of disease, or the school where the minds of men are trained. It is an institution that seeks the health and culture of the real

spiritual self,— the self that counts most of all,— the self that shall endure. It is a duty that a man owes to himself to give himself the advantages of the church, and of that free church that affords free and fullest expression and development. *It is his greatest duty, not only to his own soul, but to society at large.*

What It Offers

The Unitarian church offers to you the joy of comradeship upon the open road to God and truth.

It offers you the support and fellowship of the many who, like yourself, wish to be both free and forceful in their religious life.

It offers you a medium whereby your influence for righteousness can be vastly enlarged by union with others.

It offers you the environment wherein you can give freest and fullest expression to your spiritual and real self.

It offers you the opportunity to make your force tell most truly for truth and justice and liberty.

On Getting In Line

If you believe in this new kind of church, and it expresses the principles that you believe to be true, it is not fair for you to stand aside while others fight your battle. Besides, there is absolute need that all of us who thus believe in the liberal faith and free church should get together. That man most truly counts who is willing to line up and be counted. In no other way can he better further the interests of the cause of true religion. Hence this church has a challenge for every liberal, and fronts him with a duty as well as a privilege. If you believe in freedom and the rational principle in religion, get in line, and do your share in their advancement.

Our Welcome

In the name of liberty and in the spirit of fellowship we extend to you a welcome to join us. We give it not because of the gain that you might bring to us, or that we might add one more to a sectarian body but

that we may share with you the privileges of our free fellowship, and that with you added to our number we may both do more effective service than we have done hitherto. We can get on without you, but we can get on better with you. All we ask is that you shall test the truth of what this booklet states. If this church has nothing real and vital to give to you, it will be absurd for you to remain with us. But if it has, you are robbing yourself to remain away. In either case, you have our welcome now.

We invite you not merely for your own sake, but for the sake of the good that we can do together. There are great truths to be spoken, great wrongs to be resisted, great wants to be supplied, great deeds to be done in the name of God and justice and brotherhood! Join us, and let us go forth as a fellowship of the free to engage in high enterprise on behalf of truth and humanity! As never before, there is need of men who will voice the true, espouse the right, and make venture for God and good!

To Those Apart

If you would like to come into touch with such a church, and are not near enough to one to join its fellowship and attend its services, you are invited to write to the Unitarian national headquarters, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. You will receive the heartiest welcome into our fellowship. If you wish it, Unitarian literature will be sent you free and all inquiries answered. No matter how distant you are, you can remain in touch with our fellowship, and become a comrade in the great cause of liberal religion. Wherever you are, we extend to you our fraternal greeting and offer you place in our free fellowship. Each in his own place and his own way may help forward the ultimate triumph of freedom and truth and brotherhood in religion.

THE HEALING POWER

BY

CHARLES GORDON AMES

MINISTER OF THE CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES, BOSTON

Both Religion and Science, by keeping the door open to Truth, have made possible the entrance of error, delusion, imposture, and quackery: yet that door must never be closed,

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

"All that God owns He constantly is healing,
Quietly, gently, softly, but most surely!
He helps the lowliest herb with wounded stalk
To rise again. See, from the heavens fly down
All gracious powers to cure the blinded lamb!
Deep in the treasure-house of wealthy Nature
A ready instinct ever wakes and moves
To clothe the naked sparrow in his nest,
Or trim the plumage of an aged raven.
Yea, in the slow decaying of a rose
God works, as well as in the unfolding bud;
He works with gentleness unspeakable
In death itself; a thousand times more careful
Than the mother by her sick child watching!"

—*Ary Scheffer.*

THE HEALING POWER.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction.—PSALM ciii. 1–3.

THESE familiar words supply both starting-point and goal for a discourse on the Power that Heals. But first let us look over the ground for a moment. The methods of treatment and the professional healers of disease are many. Are they in partnership or in competition with the Supreme Healer?

At scores of meetings of the Christian Alliance—a Protestant body—men and women have risen to bless the Lord who has graciously healed their bodily maladies in answer to prayer. Similar testimonies are not uncommon.

Roman Catholic churches of the Redemptorist Order are established in many countries. Each church has among its furnishings a copy of a certain picture of the Virgin and Child, the original having been for a long time credited with supernatural virtue. At special services, held in veneration of these pictures, the sick and lame present themselves for prayer and for sprinkling of holy water brought from Lourdes, in France, where it is believed that the Mother of God once appeared. Occasionally, cures are reported by the priests on the testimony of those who have recovered. Abandoned crutches and various votive tablets are seen on the walls of a church in Roxbury, as elsewhere.

In ancient Greece, the temples of Apollo, Æsculapius, and

other popular deities were abundantly enriched with similar trophies,—grateful acknowledgments of healing wrought in answer to prayer. Indeed, the highway of history is strewn with stories of cures that were believed to be miraculous. It would have been a poor sort of god who could not have published a yearly almanac with certificates of healing. Not one could have held his place in the faith of the people if they had not believed that his ear was open to their prayers. And never have men cried to the unseen powers more earnestly than under the prompting of bodily pain or the fear of death. The priest was also the medicine man. He knew not only the properties of herbs and oils; he knew forms of incantation which could scare away malignant demons and invoke the delivering power. If he understood his business, he must often have been able to rouse into action the mental forces which control the bodily processes.

Was it all superstition, imposture, humbug? No, indeed, for often the sufferer was relieved, often the cure was genuine and permanent; and thanksgivings were offered for value received. The laws of the world and the facts of history are not the less real because we misconstrue them. The cures have not been less real because of plausible misunderstandings of their nature and causes. The simple Scotch woman was always sure the broth would come right if only she put pebbles in the bottom of the pot. Superstitions are over-beliefs, not always wholly false. Do we not spend our lives in trying to penetrate behind the traditions and the seemings to what really is?

I once witnessed a thrilling scene at a Christian Science lecture given in the old Music Hall. The place was packed, hundreds without seats. The speaker called on all present who had been helped out of any kind of illness by this method to give their testimony by rising. The response of a large part of the audience was instantaneous. The effect was impres-

sive, and such a cloud of witnesses may well have made believers of sceptics. But, on second thought, I wondered what would have been the result if Mr. Tomlinson had addressed his request to all who had been helped out of illness by other kinds of treatment, or without any treatment whatever. Might not the uprising have been unanimous? Long before the advent of Christian Science, all through the ages, in all the lands, and by all medical methods, or often in spite of them, thousands of millions have been made every whit whole of whatsoever disease they had.

A crowd of people, all thinking one way and saying the same thing, creates a presumption that they have reason on their side; yet no doctrine is proved by the argument from numbers alone. During the recent campaign we were told of a great meeting at which twenty-five thousand people shouted for Bryan, and of another meeting at which twenty-five thousand shouted for Taft. Did the shouting settle anything? Such facts are instructive. They should make us tolerant in judgment and cautious in conclusion. Yet there may be a case in which only one man is right and all the world is wrong.

Boston recently witnessed a most imposing procession of priests in gorgeous robes, attended by forty thousand loyal laymen, marching with music and banners, every face shining, while countless spectators were moved to sympathy or respect. Did it prove that we ought to call any man master, or that the Bishop of Rome has a commission from heaven to rule any conscience save his own? The faith and devotion of a multitude is a fact to be reckoned with; but no principle is settled and no truth verified, by a count of heads.

Let us give due weight to the assurance of hundreds of thousands that they have derived great physical benefit from the various mental forms of treatment. Let us neither deny nor belittle a body of honest testimony which goes to confirm what all physicians admit; namely, that through the mind—

through thought, feeling, and faith—a mighty curative power works on the body. One may add, what some physicians are slow to admit, that it would be a sad folly, and perhaps a wicked shame, not to invoke this power wherever it is shown to be applicable to the relief of disorder and suffering.

No class of practitioners appears to advantage when they claim a monopoly of the healing art, any more than of the grace of God. This art has been exercised in all lands and times, often in connection with ridiculous rites, absurd pretences, and plausible superstitions.

And now one has after-thoughts. Within a year, in Boston alone, while ten thousand have died, probably twenty thousand have recovered from illness,—gradually, rapidly, or suddenly. They have thrown off all sorts of diseases by all sorts of means, by the help of so-called remedies or without such help. Every school of practitioners must confess to the loss of cases, but every school can exhibit a fine array of genuine cures. Allopathy, homœopathy, osteopathy, mind-cure, Emmanuel cure, Christian Science,—they all can show an honorable record.

In each case where the healing seems wrought in answer to prayer, men cry, "*This*, then, is the finger of God!" But did all the rest of the twenty thousand get well without His help? To give Him credit for only a few of the cures, and to attribute all the others to human wisdom, skill, or psychic power,—is this religious faith, or is it wholesale unbelief?

Now we come to the main question, *What is the Healing Power?* Let us look for an answer broad enough to cover all actual or possible cases. The power which makes the sick man well must work wisely, or it could never set the wrong right. It must work kindly, since it works for welfare. Let this union of wisdom and love go out to the service of suffering humanity, and may not the host of convalescents join to bless the name of Him who healeth all our diseases?

"There is an original and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed," says Spencer. "All life is from the Lord," is Swedenborg's putting of the same truth. Emerson sees a power "always at work to make the bad good and the good better." Must not the Source of health for the well be also the Source of healing for the sick? The doctors have always called it *vis medicatrix naturæ*, the curative power of nature; and I think the wisest of them claim for their art nothing more than to remove obstructions and supply conditions favorable to the work of the unseen Healing Power, by whatever name it may be called.

So we may gather all cures under one Law and refer all to one Love,—to the Power which gives life, and continues to give it more abundantly to every receptive soul or body. One Power in every variety of manifestation and activity,—this is at once the scientific, philosophic, and religious explanation of the universe itself. Think of the countless ways in which life is served by gravitation, electricity, light, heat, chemic agency,—one force ever producing a multitude of results.

But man has a part to act, if he would avail himself of these natural benefits. He opens a water-gate, and the wheels of the mill saw his timber, spin and weave his garments, grind his wheat. He turns a faucet, and the stream from a distant lake flows into his pitcher. He touches a button, and the lightning illuminates his home, cooks his food, drives his chariot. In these and other matters he is a slow learner, and is not yet much beyond the alphabet. But one lesson he cannot afford to forget: to get the full benefit and service of the forces and provisions which he calls natural or supernatural, he must supply the conditions or use the means.

Why should not this law hold true through all the ranges of his existence? Will his iniquities be forgiven if he persists in them? Will his bodily ailments be cured if he rejects or

neglects the conditions of restoration? Is not the active use of medical or mental remedies as rational and orderly as the industry by which he draws his daily bread from the soil or his water from the well? In either case, according to the measure of his light and the guidance of experience, he is opening connection with that Universal Power which is the health of his body and mind.

According to his light, I say. For in the administration of medicines, as in all the psychic methods, there is a limit to human knowledge and skill. Many cures, many failures; and both are instructive. There is a vast and ever-growing body of facts. These are our teachers, however dull our scholarship.

Miraculous cures? There are no others. We count as miraculous only the uncommon or unexplained. But to the wise "everything is miraculous, or nothing is." The most common event, seen as a link in the endless chain of causes and consequences, or in its relation to the All, might well bring us to our knees.

The healing of the slightest bruise calls into action the same force which knits a broken bone. Recovery from ordinary weariness makes a draft on the same store of energy which lifts the typhoid patient from collapse. "He that raised up Jesus from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you." Does not Saint Paul thus put the very beating of our hearts into the same class with the greatest miracle of his faith?

We do not supply vitality to ourselves. Alike in health and in sickness there is a Power which works in us "above all we ask or think." We are taken along with the moving world. Our wagon is always hitched to a star, unless we uncouple it by unfaith or unfaithfulness.

Is the Divine less active when the Human takes a hand? Why do we eat and drink? Why help ourselves to the boun-

ties of the world? The whole "treasure-house of wealthy nature" is ours; and perhaps there is no kind of material substance and no process or force which man may not yet learn to utilize.

Physical agents introduced into the body produce physical results, as even a child soon learns. We do not always eat wholesome food, nor abstain from hurtful drink, nor take the right medicine. Will it be strange if the doctors make mistakes, or if reliance on mental methods, or on Providence, sometimes leads to fatal neglect of rational means? Do not all our prayers need to be qualified by the clause, "Thy will be done"? But, whenever "they that are sick need a physician," perhaps we can do the divine will by calling the doctor.

Let every fact stand: the record of cures and of failures; of cures and failures by every method man has ever tried. Only behind all, above all, within all, let us reverence and trust the many manifestations of the life-giving Power. Somehow, men are nourished by many kinds of food. The vital forces seem to know what they are about, despite our dubious dietetics, our bad cookery, our over-feeding or under-feeding. Somehow, our ailments disappear and are forgotten, despite the inadequacies and blunders of the various methods of treatment. "He knoweth our frame; He healeth our diseases; He worketh in us,"—not as an occasional visitant, but as a resident proprietor, doing business on the premises. Either this, or let us be atheists, and done with it.

"The states of the blood affect the states of the mind, and the states of the mind affect the states of the blood." So much we know, though the processes are unseen and unfelt. The most important vital functions are involuntary and unconscious, or sometimes sub-conscious. Precisely because digestion, assimilation, and circulation are managed by the life-power, it is not wise to meddle with them. Fussy self-attentions and self-

observations are like a scared passenger's hysterical attempts to snatch the reins from the driver. My friend will not often ask how I feel. The question makes me feel of myself.

If I drop in upon an invalid, it is well to listen with sympathy to the story of symptoms and sufferings; but I must watch for opportunities to turn the talk, and tell him some good news from heaven or earth; and of such news there is never a lack if one is on the watch.

We come to this: Life is all one thing. There is but One Life in the universe. That Life is the Healing Power. We share it. Our share depends on conditions, some of which are under our control. But we could not be sharers unless in connection with the Source, as the hydrant could not share the stream unless connected by pipes that reach the reservoir. Life, therefore,—our share of it,—is incomplete if the connections are incomplete, if interrupted, impaired, obstructed. Sometimes the obstructions are physical, and can be removed by physical agents. If a dash of water in the face may recall me from a swoon, a dash of some inward application may be like the touch of a whip to a lagging organ or like a check to some over-excited function. The doctor and nurse know, or ought to know, the value of certain well-proven remedies. Here is room for both science and art; and every true science or useful art is what religious men deem a gift of God and a cause for thanksgiving. The mechanical methods of the surgeon are as legitimate as those of the cabinet-maker or sculptor. All healing is divine. Often it is conditioned on the human use of means, and such means must belong to the divine order.

We have seen that there are two kinds of remedial treatment, the material and the mental or spiritual. The usefulness of both is amply verified, though neither is infallible.

The so-called Emmanuel movement aims to combine the two. It employs wise and loving personal counsel and instruction, and in a large class of cases it calls in the services of a trained physician. Its best results appear in ministering to "a mind diseased"; in lifting men and women out of depression and discouragement; in exorcising the evil spirits of fear, worry, anger, ill-will, self-disgust; in awakening the better nature and calling into action the self-healing forces.

By suggestion? Of course, of course! We are all dealers in this article, by wholesale and retail, however we name it. We practise it every day, and verify its power for good or ill. If a shadow of melancholy is creeping over me, your suggestive smile breaks on me like sunshine. If I am neurotic, fidgety, poisoning my own blood and worrying myself into a cancer, your word of peace may penetrate deeper than any drug. If I am the victim of morbid egotism, eating holes into my face by envy, suspicion, jealousy, chagrin, or feeding on any other rotten mental diet, perhaps at the table of your life I shall find a more wholesome bill of fare. If I am a slave to alcohol, ready to "give up heaven for something warm," and you set before me a picture of my emancipated self, erect, self-governed, manly, a child of God, the law of the spirit of life may make me free from the law of sin and death.

Who of us has not been helped by contact with a sane, sweet, healthy-minded, wholesome-hearted personality? Sometimes salvation comes from a heart-to-heart interview with a trusted confessor. Very often the helpful suggestion passes with a word, a look, or a letter. I gladly share the spreading persuasion that the spirit which sent Jesus about doing good to the bodies and souls of his brethren is working through many wise and kind men and women, whose mission among us is that we may "have *life*, and have it more abundantly."

Success by any treatment comes from overcoming some form

of evil with some form of good. The medicine which promotes normal secretion or excretion, which throws off chill or allays fever, has deep analogies with the truth which corrects wrong habits of thought, or with the spiritual appeal which rouses a sluggish conscience, and corrects nervous disturbance or quiets morbid feeling, by restoring moral poise and recalling the misdirected will to generous, self-forgetting activities. Any suggestion may have healing effect if only it helps to establish that inward order which is a miniature kingdom of heaven.

This thought is not "new." It is a part of our human equipment, the real world-stuff, though it may be newly realized by many. If any disciple of Mrs. Eddy, or of Dr. Worcester, or of Bishop Fallows, can really serve as an agent of the Healing Power, it must surely be by blowing into flame some spark that smoulders, or by touching into activity some dormant inward spring,—a process as natural and orderly as when the organist wakens "sweet thunders" in the silent pipes by laying his hand on the keys.

It is not given to all of us to work these gracious miracles; and the new methods, like the older ones, may suffer discredit from the mal-practice of the incompetent or the fanatical. But no amount of counterfeits should lead us to condemn what is genuine, nor should we be in haste to pronounce on the outcome of those experiments which may show both what can and what cannot be done. And if the Church bears no testimony to the Power which "healeth all our diseases," will she not be largely responsible for the decline of medical science and popular thought into materialism?

"Healing services" in churches? Why not? They may, indeed, prove as inert and mocking as many other so-called religious observances are. But wherever two or three are together in the right spirit,—receptive and trustful,—they are

not alone. Luke, the beloved Jew-Christian physician, tells of an occasion when many were together, and "the power of the Lord was present to heal." Then and there, "seeing their faith," Jesus wrought a wonder-cure upon a poor paralytic. In the minds of people and patient, suggestion took the form of contagious expectancy. Is any fact or force more real or more beneficent? We do not yet know its entire conditions and limitations, but we ought to know by this time, from daily experience, how effective are the vibrations of human atmospheres.

Why should not every meeting for common prayer and aspiration be a "healing service" without running it into cant by calling it so? I should be sorry and ashamed if some measure of divine blessing did not attend our worshipping assemblies. I believe there is no Sunday in which somebody in our congregation does not hear a whisper of peace and go away comforted, cheered, strengthened, and helped in body and spirit. How far or how often it is wise to press this aspect or urge such use of the church, and in what way it may be co-ordinated with medical advice and administration, are questions worthy of sober thought. Religious people believe not only that God is, but that He is the rewarder of them that seek Him. There seems no danger of exhausting the divine generosity.

Probably the conditions of highest health, of a life that shall be sustained and full, strong and free, are not to be prescribed like clinic treatment. To walk in the light and live in the spirit will both bind up our wounds and keep us immune, with soul and body sharing together the soft inflowing streams of light and love, power and peace.

It is doubtless true that the advocates of mental treatment have made no valuable addition to our knowledge of anatomy, physiology, biology, bacteriology, anæsthetics, or animal chemistry. These branches take their scientific and practical form

and yield their values from work done in hospitals and laboratories, or from comparative studies of the notes which doctors make of their cases.

So, also, of the large methods of prevention, through sanitation, hygiene, ventilation, pure food, and a pure water supply. Mrs. Eddy denies the usefulness of these preventive measures; yet the facts show that they have arrested the spread of pestilences which once swept away hundreds of thousands of lives, and in civilized countries have added years to the average longevity.

But we owe, also, a large and growing debt to all who have compelled attention to a truth always admitted, yet generally neglected; namely, that the power of mind over body is the principal factor in causing and curing many forms of disease, especially during the early stages; for there may come a condition of body and mind of which death is the only cure. It seems impossible to overstate the value of this recent movement in the direction of rational living and cheerful faith as a means of restoring and preserving health and sanity. The emphasis placed on this old and undervalued truth was never so urgently needed as in an age when civilization itself is disordered by the unbalancing and wreck of human nerves. Victor Hugo says, "The soul is the only bird that can carry its own cage."

We are getting impressive admonitions about the choice of our mental occupations. Life sinks if we think downward. It rises if we think upward. Our deepest hurts come from wrong mental habits which we confirm by allowance. And cannot a man take the direction of his own mind as well as of his hands and feet? Thompson says: "We are not responsible for the thoughts that enter our minds. No man ever was. What we are responsible for is the thoughts we allow to stay there, because we have a kingly power within us which can command this mechanically thinking brain." As the coun-

try brethren say, "We cannot keep the birds from flying over our heads, but we need not let them build nests in our hair."

As the sound mind and sound body are interdependent, so are the entire material, intellectual, and moral interests of mankind. Our true welfare requires that they all be unified and vitalized and kept in good repair by the free play of the Life which makes them possible. All worthy industry and business activity, as well as all the higher attainments and adornments of life, are directly or indirectly related to the health of the people, as both cause and effect. Only by rational uses, by wisely directed and intentional activities, can the earth itself serve its noblest end, to be a nursery of spiritual beings, wearing the image and sharing the life of their Author.

The Power which vitalizes and heals is ever at work to make our life complete, yet it works amid finite conditions and along evolutionary lines. Auerbach strains this point by saying that "there is not a perfect leaf in all the forests of Germany." For every creature and every part of a creature there is a norm or standard of perfection—a divine idea—which the creative processes tend to reach and realize; but the hindrances are many, and must be accepted as a part of the order. Indeed, it seems that to resist and overcome obstacles is our appointed gymnastic, — a condition of vigor and growth toward excellence. Our exposure and liability to error, evil, pain, and temptation, make this earthly scene a school of sacred discipline.

"As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." Is not this the open secret of Jesus, and the inmost biography of all noble lives? He was conscious of his own power as really his own, because given to him. To receive and exercise such personal power and to develop a will in harmony with the higher Will, this is our

quest. Coming into that harmony, we shall be in partnership with the power, wisdom, and goodness of the living One.

The conditions of receiving help vary with inward and outward conditions, but the Source of help is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. We cannot penetrate the deep mystery of our being. How should we penetrate the larger Mystery out of which our being comes and by which it is sustained? But if submissive, receptive, obedient, trustful, what shall separate us from the Power which is

"Almighty to create, almighty to renew"?

In our utmost strength, as in our utmost weakness, our refuge is still in the Everlasting Arms.

[No. 242]

"HOW ABOUT THE MORAL MAN?"

BY

REV. RODERICK STEBBINS

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

(fac simile)

HOW ABOUT THE MORAL MAN?

What a noble big hearted, **MORAL** man Mr. A—— is. Such a good neighbour and citizen, and not only generous but kind and helpful to those in trouble—and full of **GOOD WORKS.**

Mrs. B—— is such a lovely fine character, so cheerful and sunny, with a pleasant word for all—always abounding in **GOOD WORKS**—

Just such people as we should send right into Heaven.

WHY?—Because we judge by outside appearances.— 1 Sam. 16: 7.

—OTHER SIDE—

God Says:—

"Not by works or good deeds, but by grace are ye saved— Eph. 2: 8-9

"If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves— I. John, 1: 8

"All have sinned and come short glory God— Rom. 3: 23

"By works of the flesh shall no man be justified— Gal. 2: 16

Bible does not say— { **Do the best you can** and thou shalt be saved—Titus 3: 5-7

BUT

DOES SAY { "Believe on Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved— Acts 16: 31

(Note the difference.)

GOOD Morals and Good Works are **MOST DESIRABLE** but **they wont save you.**

Our great loving Heavenly Father has provided a way through His Son Jesus Christ which is **Sure** and **SAFE.**

"**I AM** the way, the truth and the life— "**Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out**— John 14: 6 and 6: 37

If you are to be saved, it **MUST BE AS A SINNER,** believing and trusting in Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour.—I. Tim. 1: 15.

Will YOU?

"HOW ABOUT THE MORAL MAN?"

The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.—II Corinthians iii: 6.

The circular which is printed on the opposite page is an accurate reproduction of one that has recently been widely distributed among the students of a college in Massachusetts. It is copied here that the reader may be able to give it careful attention and to follow it in relation to what is herein said.

It contains an interesting statement of belief and puts in a brief and striking way the contention of a large number of Christian people that the heart of Christianity lies not in right *deeds* but in right *beliefs*. It also assumes the authority to state what these right beliefs are. In plain language the circular says, "Good morals and good works are most desirable, but they won't save you." And as for the *belief* that *will* save you, it confidently asserts, "If you are to be saved, it must be as a sinner, believing and trusting in Jesus Christ as your personal saviour."

This circular is a concrete illustration of the truth that old beliefs and long entrenched prejudices die hard. It is a forcible reminder that liberal Christianity has still an important work to do. I say "liberal Christianity," not "Unitarianism," because it would be arrogant to assume that the Unitarian church has a monopoly of the teaching which will counteract such dogmatism as this circular contains and it would be equally false to deny that there are

Christians, not of the Unitarian name, to whom the teachings of this circular are as abhorrent as they are to us.

Nevertheless, in justice to ourselves and without false modesty we may say that the Unitarian church places its emphasis, as does no other, not only upon the desirability but upon the absolute necessity of good morals and good works, and that it asserts with uncompromising clearness its conviction that the life a man lives counts more in the sight of God than the creed in which he believes. I am thankful that we have no monopoly of this teaching. It would go hard with the world if we had, for we are but a small number and in the great Christian forces of the country our influence, though great in proportion to our numbers, is not, in comparison with the influence of other churches, large. Yet, when such a circular as this comes to our notice, we see how important it is that our work should continue. We can not remain silent, our voice must be heard from our own pulpits, and echoed from the pulpits of such other churches as are brave enough, liberal and generous enough to repeat our message and to make it their own.

To our young people this circular is specially valuable as showing the kind of influence and teaching which we, as liberal Christians deplore; which no branch of the Unitarian church, however conservative or however radical, would for a moment countenance.

It is sometimes said that the work of the Unitarian church is done, that what is essential and vital in our message has become incorporated in the teaching of other churches. If this were true, we

should have no cause for complaint. While we have an honorable pride in our name, we desire more than all else the success of our principles. But right here before us is proof that our work is *not* done. Here is the direct statement that one of our passionately held beliefs, the superiority of the moral man to the credal man, is contrary to truth and scripture. A propagandism is being carried on among a body of young men, presumably the leaders of the next generation, which, if accepted by them, we believe will be most detrimental to the moral well-being of the community.

The tendency of such teaching as is before us, whether intentional or not, is to under-value good morals. "A moral life is desirable, but it will not save you." Salvation being put forth as the greatest desideratum, it is evident that what will not give salvation is not a necessity. This inference is inevitable, and it is capable of doing infinite harm.

We are not fighting a man of straw which is set up for the mere pleasure of knocking him down. We are fighting a live issue, witness this circular, which is active in every part of our land.

Let us look at this circular a little in detail and see how Unitarians differ from it, from its contentions and its conclusions.

It assumes that salvation is the thing most to be desired. To be saved is the highest object of human endeavor. But it does not say what we are to be saved *from*, or what we are to be saved *for*. It presupposes a knowledge of this on the part of those who read its message. Probably we shall not be wrong if we say that the salvation it promises is salvation *from* future agony *for the sake of* future bliss. Now

we do not feel that such salvation is of much consequence, we know too little about the future to take it out of the hands of God where we are willing reverently to leave it. We have, however, a firm conviction that the future is inevitably bound up with the present, that what a man sows, whether good or evil, that will he reap here and hereafter. We do not talk much about salvation because the word is so associated with ideas which are distasteful to us. Nevertheless if any one insists that we shall use the word, then we say that the highest object of human endeavor is to be saved in this life from the things that degrade the mind and the body and the soul. We are chiefly concerned with salvation from selfishness, dishonesty, lust, passion, appetite and greed, real vices that have a real grip upon men in this life. Dr. Grenfell voices our belief when he says that salvation through Jesus Christ for the fishermen of the North Sea is salvation from the vile whiskey which, more than the hardships of their calling, destroys their lives and makes wretched the lives of those dependent upon them. This is what we wish to be saved from. The degrading thought, the unholy desire, the unrighteous practice, the familiarity with things evil so that we shall doubt the reality of things good.

And what are we saved *for?* A future of bliss and glory? Yes, we hope so, but in some way that future must be wrought out of the present when we stand up to our duties as men and women who respect themselves and others, and who believe that God takes pleasure in righteousness. We are saved for the clean mind and the pure heart and the clear conscience. We are saved for the lovely affections

that consecrate life and for the devout hopes that ennoble it. We are saved for the faith that, having done our best, God will do his best, and that his best will be better than we dare hope and think.

The circular warns us not to trust to appearances. It suggests that the good neighbor and citizen, generous and kind and helpful, may be masquerading as a saint when at heart he is a sinner. It cautions us that the lovely woman, fine in character, cheerful and sunny, with a pleasant word for all, may be nothing but a pretence, a whited sepulchre, and it thinks to support its uncharitable suspicions with the entirely irrevelant verse from the Bible, "The Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." How futile, and irrelevant to the subject in hand, are these words, for they refer to a man's personal appearance, to his features and his stature, not to the character of his life. Let God look upon the heart of the noble, big-hearted moral man, and the heart of the lovely, fine, cheerful woman. On our way to the kingdom of heaven, it behooves the rest of us to step aside and let them pass.

The writer of this circular is fond of the old-fashioned and long-discredited method of quoting proof-texts. We can meet him on his own ground and marshal a noble array of passages from the Bible supporting our contention that "by works a man is justified," but nothing would be gained. A mass of literature like the Bible, written by so many men, under so many different influences and covering so

large a period of time contains words that can be quoted with effect for almost any theory which man can devise. Rather than quoting texts from writings that range from eight hundred years before Christ to one hundred years after his death, let us get the spirit of the Bible, or better, if we call ourselves Christians, the spirit of the gospels instead of the letter of any one part of the varied writings we call the Bible.

You will notice that, in seeking proof texts for its theory of salvation, this circular resorts chiefly to the writings of Paul. Paul is a great figure in the history and development of Christianity, but in his subtle doctrines for which he alone is responsible, we can hardly recognize the simple but eternal principles of Jesus. It is Paul and not Jesus who is responsible for the orthodox theology of the Christian church. If we wish to test that theology by comparing it with the teaching of Jesus, we must not take the word of Paul, or of Peter, of John or of James, but we must take the words of Jesus himself. And even here, in the gospels, we are forced to conclude, as scholars tell us, that we have "a mass of more or less ordered notes, the harvest of certain fervent years filled with missionary activity, filled, too, with the sayings and preachings of hundreds of unknown disciples." From this confused report of the life of Jesus, the best we have, we must take the spirit and not the letter. The writers who were not always able to repeat his words, could, in a measure, restore the personality of Jesus. This they did. While, doubtless, often misquoting him (who would think of putting on an equality the story of the blasting of the fig tree and the parable of the prodigal

son), they have been wonderfully successful in recreating his spirit, so that one who reads the gospels intelligently and sympathetically rests his faith not so much upon the explicit words of Jesus as upon the spirit that animated his life. It is by that spirit that his message is to be interpreted to-day. It is that spirit over and above his reported words which must determine his influence upon life. We believe that he who reads the gospels, not to establish a special dogma but to learn the dominating purpose of Jesus' life, will find nothing there to accord with the teaching that Jesus did not place the moral life far in advance of any doctrine concerning himself, or man or God. From the impression we derive of Jesus in reading the gospels, the words, "Not every one that saith Lord Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," stand out in perfect harmony with his spirit and his life. We have every right and every reason to take these words as Jesus' answer to the question, "What about the moral man?"

You see how we differ from the writer of this circular in our view of the Bible. To him, it is the final and authoritative word of God. To us it is a part of the magnificent record of the long religious history of mankind. There are dreary places in that history, dry and thirsty lands where no water is, there are also mounts of visions on which has stood "some watcher of the skies." As there are passages in the noble history of our country which express neither the genius nor the ideals of the American people, so there are passages in the Bible, in the religious history of the race, which express neither the genius nor the ideals of our religion.

But as there are figures in our history, like Washington and Lincoln, around which we group the noblest ideals of our land, so in the Bible there are figures like Moses and Isaiah, and Jesus above all the rest, in whose keeping repose forever the religious ideals of mankind.

It was James Martineau, the great English Unitarian, who said, "I cannot rest contentedly on the past: I cannot take a step towards the future without its support." The religious history of mankind is still in the making. But it cannot separate itself from the mighty past. It must rest upon the great principles and truths that the past has discovered, while in the future it makes ever fresher and wider interpretations and applications of them. We believe in growth, as well as in Beginnings, and in God's present revelations as we do in his revelations in the past.

Are our minds and hearts in sympathy with these ideas of man, and of God? Then we are wonderfully blessed. We can live in God's universe without fear. We need not settle all the questions that perplex mankind, nor need we be distressed that we cannot understand all mysteries and all knowledge. We need only the will to do well according to our light and our opportunity. We need not even feel that we must always do our best, but only the best of which at that day and hour we are capable. Sometimes our spirits take wings and rise above all the difficulties and the burdens of our bodies and our wills. Again a leaden dullness rests upon our spirits and they droop and tire on the heavenly road. Then it is that we may, for our encouragement, repeat the words of scripture, "The Lord looketh on the heart,"

and if He find our hearts and our ways set towards things good and pure and holy, though we may not always reach them in their fulness, then we may believe that we are safe, in this life and in the life to come.

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT MAINTAINS (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT PUBLISHES (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT AIDS (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

IT ADMINISTERS endowments (1) for the benefit of schools and churches of the Unitarian order; (2) for the relief of poor and worthy ministers and the widows of ministers; (3) for educating young men for ministerial service; (4) for providing public lectures in centers of population; (5) for the benefit of schools for colored people in the South; and (6) for many other beneficent purposes.

IT UNITES the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

For the maintenance of these endeavors the Association depends upon the annual contributions of the churches and the friends of the cause. Contributions should be sent to the Treasurer of the Association at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

[No. 243]

FROM DOUBT TO CONFIDENCE IN RELIGION

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

BY

REV. JOHN W. ROWLETT, D.D.

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

OUR FAITH

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD
THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS
SALVATION BY CHARACTER
THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND
ONWARD AND UPWARD FOREVER

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

FROM DOUBT TO CONFIDENCE IN RELIGION[1]

Mr. President, Members of the Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Since this is the first representative body of Unitarians that I have had the pleasure of addressing, in the very first place, I want to publicly apologize to all Unitarian believers for what I used to think and say about you while an orthodox minister.

The greatest wrong done to orthodox Christians by their teachers is not to be found so much in what they say as in what they fail to say. I remember with what great surprise I discovered that nearly all my favorite authors were Unitarians. My prescribed course of theological reading had kept me in absolute ignorance of that fact.

I tell you I used to have some strange notions about you. I had been told that you had some degree of mentality, but no religion. You were a cold, intellectual, unsympathetic, haughty people, who prided yourselves upon your intelligence, who trusted wholly in your reason, and who had no use for Jesus Christ and very little for God.

Brethren, I apologize in the language of Paul, "I did it ignorantly and in unbelief."

In the second place, I want to thank you for giving

[1] An address delivered before the Southern Conference of Unitarian Churches by John W. Rowlett, D.D., upon his entry into the Unitarian Fellowship after having held several important pastorates in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

me a place among you, and for your association and fellowship while I undertake to tell others about the great blessedness of the gospel of pure religion and perfect liberty. I know how great is the joy and peace of that man who for the first time reaches the certain conviction that an honest error of thought will never condemn him; and that all that God requires to receive him to mercy and blessedness is mental honesty and heart purity. I bless God for having made known to me this new gospel, and having thus freed me from doubt and disquietude and fear. With peace of soul I have found freedom of mind, the precious liberty of the children of God.

I

I know what the old view of religion is. I know what orthodox Christianity is, and I know that orthodox Christians and ministers, as a rule, are strictly honest. One thing for which orthodox Christianity stands is a religious disposition and a righteous life, although it does not always lay the main stress upon this, and herein differs from Unitarian Christianity which always emphasizes the holy character and the righteous life as the things of paramount importance. The honest orthodox Christian, who sincerely believes the creed to which he subscribes and who is loyal to his church vows and obligations, deserves universal respect. We find fault with his doctrines and opinions, and we are concerned about him, because we feel sure that no matter how good and noble he may be he would be a stronger and better man with the Unitarian view of life. For while religion does not consist in a high degree of mentality, nor in holding

correct opinions, yet opinion, as has been said, is character in the making, and the higher one's mental development and the more perfect his knowlege, other things being equal, the better will be his type of religion. If our Unitarian gospel does not produce a better type of Christian manhood and civilization, we have no mission to the world. That it does is an unquestionable fact. This thought ought to thrill us and make us missionaries enthusiastic to carry to all men every where the modern view of God and the world.

Orthodox Christianity is a system of ideas, and in this system there are two parts, a body of doctrines and certain opinions respecting it. The body of doctrines is variously designated, as a set of intellectual formulas, a series of dogmatic statements, a systematic theology, a confession of faith or a creed. The orthodox doctrines, such as the trinity, the fall of man, the deity of Jesus, his miraculous conception and physical resurrection, the vicarious atonement, and the infallibility of the Bible, are well known. There was a time when I accepted these doctrines, not by any real process of reasoning, but upon the testimony of an outward authority supposed to be infallible.

I had been taught to believe that this body of doctrines was complete and final. It was a revealed system of infallible truths. Theology was not and could not become a progressive science. When any one reaches the conclusion that theology is a progressive science he has abandoned the orthodox position.

Again, I had been taught to think that it was necessary to steadfastly believe these doctrines in order to be saved, to be acceptable to God. Hence, the ac-

ceptance of them was made the basis of church membership and the test of Christian fellowship.

I had also been taught to believe that this body of doctrines was the true test of truth. It represented the teaching of the Bible — and the Bible was infallible. Just in so far as this system of doctrines represented the teaching of the Bible it was an outward infallible authority. All the ideas that were in harmony with it were true, and all those that were not in accord with it were necessarily false and dangerous.

There was a time when I held these opinions. I do not censure myself for accepting these doctrines and holding these opinions, and hence I do not condemn another for accepting doctrines and holding opinions which I now regard as false. His acceptance of them is due, not to sin, but to lack of knowledge and experience. He has been kept in ignorance of higher and better views by some ecclesiastical authority, claiming to be sacred and divine. He has been taught to use an improper test of truth. He is in bondage to some outward authority claiming to be infallible. Just as to-day on the foreign missionary field the modern missionary no longer thinks of idolatry as being due to sin but to ignorance, so we must think of the idolatry involved in the worship of the Virgin Mary and the superstition manifested in the belief of the Virgin birth of Jesus as being due, not to sin, but to ignorance. The sin is to be found in those who are better informed and yet who do not do all in their power to create an intellectual and moral atmosphere in which it would be impossible for such false ideas and superstitious practices to live.

II

I think I know what the new view of religion is. I no longer believe the old doctrines, but I have some new ones that are radically different. I have come to accept the Unitarian doctrines, such as the unity, the holiness and the goodness of God, the rise of man, the divinity of humanity and of Jesus, the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, salvation by character, the spiritual leadership of Jesus, and the progress of mankind onward and upward forever.

I still have a creed, one that is comprehensive, reasonable and morally exacting. Before becoming a Unitarian and before I knew much about the Unitarian church, I wrote out my creed in this form. "I reject all error and accept all truth, assuming the responsibility of deciding for myself what is error and what is truth. I desire and purpose to be true and pure in disposition and right and righteous in conduct. And I wish and seek for myself and for all mankind the fullest and completest life."

My creed is a body of positive truths. I am not so much concerned to deny the doctrine of the trinity as I am to affirm the unity, the holiness and the goodness of God. I am not so much concerned to deny the deity of Jesus as I am to affirm the divinity of humanity. I am not so much concerned to deny the dogmas of the infallibility of the Bible and of the church as I am to affirm the doctrine of the divine immanence, the idea that God is a living being always present everywhere and always active, the doctrine that makes the incarnation co-extensive with humanity, that makes all history sacred because it is all the working out of the plan of God, all enlightening

literature a revelation, and every man through his reason and conscience a possible altar where the divine glory shines and where truth is made known.

I hold now that theology is a progressive science. I want no body of doctrines that is fixed and final, but a creed that is a growing and developing system of ideas. I hold all my opinions subject to revision. I gladly welcome progress in theological thought, and stand for all the truth that has been or will be discovered or revealed.

I also hold that the religious disposition requires not the acceptance of certain dogmatic statements, but mental honesty. How unreasonable it is to tell a man that he must give mental assent to certain intellectual propositions which do not appear to his mind to be true, in order to be religious. It is telling him that he must be mentally dishonest in order to be religious, when, so far as the intellect is concerned, the one thing that the religious disposition does require is intellectual sincerity.

In addition, I hold that, not any outward authority, but reason and conscience, is the final test of truth. These Unitarian doctrines and principles I have accepted and hold by a real process of reasoning, based upon an inner conviction.

This is the true Protestant idea. There is absolutely no logical break between the Protestant principle and the Unitarian position, for Protestantism can not, without ceasing to be Protestantism, recognize any outward authority that is inconsistent with the inward law of reason. In its essential nature the Protestant idea is a transfer of the seat of authority from without to within, a transfer of the basis of

church membership from without to within, and a transfer of religion itself from without to within, from outward observance to inward devotion.

The choice that the individual is called upon to make is not between authority and reason, but between outward authority and inward authority, between the conclusions reached by others in the exercise of their reason and the conclusion reached by himself in the exercise of his own reason. There is no outward authority that is final. It is the inward authority that is supreme, and is the court of last resort. When there is a conflict between them, the Protestant idea declares that the judgment of reason and conscience must be final.

Of course, the truth is the ultimate source of authority in matters of religion, because truth is God's word. If we can only find the truth, it is authoritative. But who decides for the individual as to what is truth? No one but himself only. This is the Protestant principle, and there is no logical break between this and the modern Unitarian position.

The so-called liberal orthodox Christian is to-day attempting to occupy a slippery inclined plane. The Unitarian has completed the slide. There is many an orthodox Christian to-day who is holding on to some outward form of authority with great tenacity, but there is many a one who has let go and who has found the everlasting rock of truth beneath his feet. The Unitarian is the true protestant. The only logical course is either to deny the validity of the Protestant principle and go back into the Roman Catholic Church, the one assured religion of authority that permits no doubts nor perplexing questions,

or to go boldly on, trusting in God, keeping faith in the inner guide and following it into the religion of the Spirit and of absolute liberty.

Having rejected the old doctrines and opinions and having accepted the new ones, I could no longer remain in an orthodox church and pulpit and be honest. That is the whole story.

A minister writing of my course said that I had "gone adrift in a shoreless ocean of doubt and unbelief." In reply I said: "You are badly mistaken. I have, indeed, sailed out on a boundless ocean, but it is a sea of truth and faith and hope and love; and I am not drifting, but sailing steadily on. I have not discarded the Christian religion, but only some old theological rubbish. I have merely shaken off the shackles of traditionalism and ceremonialism, the twin foes of spiritual religion; and I am trying to stand forth in the freedom of unfettered thought and unbiased judgment. In my theological thought I have made my way out of the storms of doubt and through the fogs of skepticism, have safely passed over the bar of reconstruction, and am beginning to feel the long swell of the open sea of truth on which I intend to sail forever."

STEPS OF BELIEF

By James Freeman Clarke

Size, 5 x 7; pages, 311; price, 60 cents *net;* postage, 8 cents.

AN able advocate's successful defence of Rational Christianity against Atheism, Free Religion, and Romanism In a vigorous, unprejudiced, and frank way the author emphasizes the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion while at the same time undermining the positions upon which these three opponents of Rational Christianity take their stand.

ORTHODOXY: Its Truths and Errors

By James Freeman Clarke

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2; pages, 512; price, 75 cents *net;* postage, 12 cents.

A FAIR, broad-minded presentation and examination of Orthodox doctrines from the Unitarian point of view. Although the writer's criticisms are acute, the spirit of the book is conciliatory, and the method reasonable and just. In a style clear and forcible is presented much wholesome theological truth.

ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS IN RELIGION

By James Freeman Clarke

Size, 4 1-4 x 6; pages, 148; price, cloth, 35 cents *net;* postage, 5 cents; price, paper, 25 cents *net;* postage, 4 cents.

THESE lectures are admirable presentations of the vital principles of Christian faith, containing many helpful suggestions, especially for those disturbed by the transition from the old to the new religious thought. The subjects are: I. Faith and Belief: Essential Belief concerning God. II. Christ and Christianity. III. The Bible. IV. The Church and Worship. V. Christian Experience. VI. The Future Life.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT MAINTAINS (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT PUBLISHES (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT AIDS (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

IT ADMINISTERS endowments (1) for the benefit of schools and churches of the Unitarian order; (2) for the relief of poor and worthy ministers and the widows of ministers; (3) for educating young men for ministerial service; (4) for providing public lectures in centers of population; (5) for the benefit of schools for colored people in the South; and (6) for many other beneficent purposes.

IT UNITES the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

For the maintenance of these endeavors the Association depends upon the annual contributions of the churches and the friends of the cause. Contributions should be sent to the Treasurer of the Association at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

[No. 244]

THE POSITION AND FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

BY

REV. JULIAN C. JAYNES

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE POSITION AND FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

I have chosen for my text a sentence from the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."

We do not know the name of the writer. We know, however, from the quality of the letter that he was a man of exceptional sagacity and intellectual power.

We do not know where these Hebrews lived to whom he was writing. We know, however, that they were converted Jews, who had organized themselves into a little Christian community. They were, moreover, important enough to justify a letter from this apostle of the new religion. In the body of that letter he incidentally gives them his idea of a true church.

He assumes that it is a group of people drawn together by the attractive power of a common religious purpose. They have united around some source of inspiration, where the mind finds satisfaction and the heart finds peace. He exhorts them to stand fast by this central thing of faith. And then he goes on to intimate that, if they are loyal to these ideals of their organization, they will be stimulated to the exercise of good will and to the performance of good works.

That conception of what the Church is and what it is for is over eighteen hundred years old; but, in spite of its antiquity, in spite of the flock of new definitions that clamor for recognition, I am going to say to you to-night that the vital values of the old idea have not departed, and that a faithful adherence to its plain teaching was never more needed than it is to-day.

The Church in recent years has been summoned to the bar of judgment. The indictment emanates from various quarters of public opinion. The specific charges are quite as various as the sources from which they come. The poor say that the Church is a sacred toy of the rich. The rich say that the Church is caressing the idols of socialism, in order to conciliate the poor. One party cries out that the Church is coquetting with Higher Criticism and Modernism and gross unbelief. Another declares that the Church has settled down into a hopelessly contented marriage with superannuated dogma.

Some complain that the Church withdraws from practical affairs and isolates itself in clouds of sentiment. Others censure it because it is too worldly and inclusive and thrusts its meddlesome hand into business and politics.

There are many other things said about the Church which seem to be very discouraging to those who are interested in its welfare.

We are told that it is an obsolete institution, and that the manlier part of human life has grown beyond it. Its critics declare that its ministry is declining, that young men of power no longer enter its offices, that it is losing its hold upon the masses, and that all the great humanitarian movements of to-day

originate quite outside of the Church and have no connection with it.

This is certainly a very formidable arraignment of the Church. It is also a very puzzling one, for it would prove a serious challenge to any court of inquiry to ask it to sift these contradictory charges and to determine where the balance of truth is to be found.

It is therefore not my purpose to give specific answers to these various criticisms of the Church. Let me say, however, that, if they were true, or if any significant portion of them were true, the Church would be past all sensibility to these prods of public opinion. It would be dead already, and there would be no need of trying either to defend it or to kill it again. Nature has her own way of disposing of dying things, and society also has effective methods of burying effete and worthless institutions.

And yet all these complaints are partly true. There are facts which give cause for every one of them. But they are facts which apply to specific cases and not to the Church as a whole. You say the sun is an imperfect orb of light because it carries some black spots on its surface; and yet, while you criticise, you throw open your window blinds that its purifying power may pass into your home.

You point to a thousand blighted ears in a field of wheat; but the harvest is gathered, the mills grind on, and men have bread.

You declare that you know men who are dishonest and betray their trusts, and yet you base your whole system of commercial activity upon your confidence in the integrity and honor of mankind. Likewise there are defects in the Church. It has made its

mistakes, it is making them every day; and yet in this country there are billions of dollars invested in church property and twenty-five millions of people attend religious services every Sunday.

When, therefore, we are confronted by this array of complaints against the Church, we are to remember this significant fact: that the Church has grown up out of human life, and is solely a creation of the human heart and mind.

We have too often made the mistake in the past of believing that the Church was some unique, supernatural institution let down out of the skies. We have expected it to perform miracles. We have fancied that it would redeem the world with a gesture, and that the kingdom of God would come rolling in some fine morning on the path of the sunrise. We have been disappointed. There have been no miracles or sunburst kingdoms. And so some of us, in captious mood, get together and decide that the Church is a failure. It is a failure as a miraculous creation, but it is not a failure as a natural product of human life.

Wherefore, with the glamour gone and our eyes open, we are to understand that it is to be judged as one of those institutions which man has devised to meet the needs of his social, mental, and spiritual nature. It is a tool which he has invented. It is not an end in itself, but a means to moral and religious education. It goes up or goes down with the man. It reflects his nobilities, and it reflects his moral poverty. It is divine only as the people who compose it are divine. It is powerful only as the human beings behind it put their power into it.

Therefore you have as many types of church as

you have types of men. If you see a church that is nothing but a rich man's club, disguised with a holy name, it is because that particular church is filled with rich men who desire to mask their hypocrisy with Christian symbolism. If there is a church that is selfish and mean, it is because its members are selfish and mean. If the ministry is declining, it is because the people demand archangels at the minimum earthly wage.

If there is a church still feeding on the husks of an archaic theology, it is because its men and women still tolerate that kind of food. If you know a church that is indifferent to the wrong and injustice of the social order, its attitude is but the composite photograph of human souls, whose owners have abandoned the ideals of a Christian civilization.

The Church, then, is what the people make it, or allow it to be. It is therefore to be expected that there will be examples of failure, examples of worldliness, examples of dangerous radicalism, of stupid conservatism, of poor, inefficient service,—enough to prove every charge true, and yet not enough to condemn the thing itself. If you indict the whole Church, you indict the whole people. If you charge it with neglect of the practical interests of humanity, you charge yourselves with the same offence. We are all bound up with the weal or woe of the institutions which we ourselves have created.

The Church, however, has become alarmed at these criticisms. It winces under the sharp thrusts of public opinion. It realizes that some of this censure is richly deserved. It has begun to think, begun to examine itself, begun to ask questions as to what it ought to do. It sees with sufficient clearness that

the old time is dead and that a new time has come. A revolution is in the social order such as the world has never seen before. A change is coming over the face of society, — a change in our conceptions of God and man, a change in our ideas of social responsibility, a change in our thinking in regard to the economic values of life. The Church hears less of the intoning of the creed and more of the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." The call is not so much for a heaven in another world as it is for a little more of heaven in this world. Everywhere there is uppermost a discontent with existing conditions and the feverish desire to improve them. The man at the bottom is climbing up the stairs and at every step is grimly asking, "Why?" He is seeking betterment, not in terms of the spirit, but in terms of bread and money and power. And there is a man at the top who is admonishing the climber to be patient and satisfied and not to come so fast. And he, too, is seeking safety, not in terms of the spirit, but in terms of bread and money and power.

The air is filled with strange cries and new watchwords, and even the old phrases of freedom and justice and brotherhood are charged with novel meanings and are uttered with inflections we have never heard before.

And here stands the Church in the midst of this social upheaval. It is caught midway of the battlefield. It is the target of all sorts of missiles from all sorts of sources. It is a critical time. And now come prophets, zealous for the kingdom of God, and say that something must be done and that right quickly. The Church must justify itself or perish. It must come out of its cloistered sanctity and get

down to practical service. And so, in behalf of the Church, they begin to do something that is practical; and, fancying that the practical thing is the visible thing, they cry out: "We will have a kingdom of God that men can touch and see, and we will have it at once. Never mind the wisdom of patience or the power of education or the grace of growth. These things are too slow. There is no time to wait. Bring in the kingdom of God according to orders, and bring it in by violence if necessary." But it happens that these prophets do not agree as to the details of how the kingdom is to be established. They will therefore go back to the New Testament for authority. And one reads that the Master drew the crowds, and that the common people heard him gladly. And so he turns on the electric lights and offers a dramatic religion to win the masses. Another reads that the Master fed the multitude with loaves and fishes, and he transforms the Church into a dispensary of bread. Another reads that the Master healed the lepers and cured the sick, and so he makes the Church the headquarters of apostolic psychotherapeutics. And still another reads that the Master rebuked the Pharisees for devouring widows' houses, and he transplants his church into the arena of public affairs and challenges for something he calls social justice.

And so the Church, in its excitement under criticism and in anxious haste to serve, is scattering itself in all sorts of so-called practical philanthropies. It is all very bewildering. Yesterday we heard the cry, "Lo, the kingdom is over here." To-day we are greeted from another quarter, "Lo, the kingdom has come to us." And to-morrow we shall hear the beat

of drums in some other place and be told that the millennial herald has arrived there. It is indeed very disconcerting to one who somehow feels that these are not the most important things for the Church to do. He admires the resolute desire to serve. He is touched by the deep sincerity and moved by the devout enthusiasm of these efforts to adjust the Church to the conditions of modern life; and sometimes he wonders if he is not mistaken, wonders if he is not behind the times, and that after all the new days place new obligations upon the Christian Church.

And then the old convictions return, with fresh insistence, and he feels surer than ever before that back of all these things still lie the fundamental duties which the Church is called to perform for the betterment of the world. Mark you, it is not a question as to whether social crookedness ought to be made straight. Damned indeed is the man who can look over the inclosure of his own prosperity and complacently watch the wrong and wretchedness in his neighbor's yard. Base indeed is that social system which permits the strong to exploit the weak and subsidizes the devil in the enterprises of men. Doubtless there are wrongs to be righted. Doubtless labor has its grievance, and socialism has its evils to attack, and poverty has its story of injustice to tell. But the question is not whether these ills are to be cured, but, plainly and frankly, whether the Church as a church is to abdicate its spiritual authority and become a secular agency to cure them. It is as if a pilot were standing at the wheel, steering his ship among the rocks and shoals of a dangerous coast. There is a panic on board, and men are

calling to him to come and quell the trouble. What should he do: Desert his post to quiet the fears of some timid passengers, or should he delegate that duty to others and care for his ship on whose safety defends the safety of all the people?

Consider now the two primary offices of the Church. One is a position and the other is a function. The position of the Church is the position of the ideal. It is like the mariner's compass that points infallibly to the magnetic north. There are compasses indeed that point anywhere. They may be broken or exhausted or deranged by local conditions. But the normal compass, unimpeded, swings straight to the eternal pole. The constellations shift their positions from hour to hour. The atmospheric clouds obscure and thunder and drop their blinding storms. Men lose themselves in the darkness, but come back to light and life and peace along the pathway which the needle shows. Likewise the Church points to the ideal. Some churches may falter and mislead; but the Church, unhindered, makes plain the open pathway to the eternal verities of the moral world. What are those verities but God and the worth of the human soul? What are those verities but righteousness and good will and the peace which the world can neither give nor take away? What are those verities but the substance of the things for which the heart hopes and the reality of the things of which the mind dreams? Ideal? Sentimental? Visionary? Yes, but the most substantial thing on earth is the vision and the most practical thing in human life is the dream. And toward these ideal things, toward the fulfilment of every holy desire, toward the answer of every earnest prayer,

toward the place where every good becomes a better and every better becomes a best, the Church directs the way and serves as counsellor, friend, and guide.

The danger of every generation since civilization began has been the danger of losing the ethical impulse in the struggle for existence,—the danger of forgetting goodness and truth and beauty amid the insistent claims of pleasure, ambition, and passion. And the Church in its best estate has stood as a warning against that danger. It has gathered into itself the best aspirations and fairest hopes of its time: it has taken into its hands the truest standards of the day, and with no uncertain sound has preached in behalf of the values of the spirit. That is its position to-day. In an age when large emphasis is placed on material things, in a time when too often we see the activities of life in the grasp of sordid motives, the Church flings its emphasis on the elements of character and praises the sanity of the unselfish life. It speaks a defiant contradiction to a philosophy of the dust. It safeguards the reverences of life. It cares for the moral visions of the soul. It holds aloft the emblems of a purified humanity. It dignifies the Godward aspirations of the heart by pronouncing them to be the highest and noblest expressions of manhood. It stands alone among all the institutions of our social world as the school of religion and as the treasury of moral inspirations. The state is a civic machine for dispensing rights and privileges. The public school is pledged primarily to the delivery of knowledge and not of character. Even the home is concerned more about food and raiment and worldly success than about the moral imperative and the victories of the higher life. The

Church alone is pledged to the teaching of ethical living, to the uplifting of sacred standards, to the inner obediences of the soul to God. That is what it is for. It has no other reason for being on earth at all. Its one unique commission is to conserve the ideal and to hold it up clean, distinct, beautiful, imperative, before the eyes of men.

The other office of the Church is inspirational. It is as clear and simple as the first. It is the function of persuading men to be loyal to the ideal. It is the function of awakening in them the sense of personal responsibility and inducing them to put principles into action and to transmute visions into service.

The text states the idea with old English precision: "To provoke unto love and good works." Observe that word "provoke." It means to call forth, to excite. The second half, then, of the business of the Church is to make itself the center and source of provocation to noble living and deeds of good will.

In the midst of a city stands a huge building whose tall chimneys are belching smoke and whose windows are jarring with the throbbing impact of machinery. Within are great dynamos, sucking the electric energy from the atmospheric reservoirs of the earth. From the building diverge bundles of wires, each splitting and radiating until the city is covered with a vast net-work of metallic threads. Mills are grinding, looms are roaring, lights are burning, vehicles are rushing along the streets: all the complex industries of a people are going forward — why and how? Because that central source of power through those metal arteries is pumping into every part of the city the fluent strength and fire and vital force of the inexhaustible earth.

The Church is the power house of the spirit. Its men and women are the avenues through which the forces of the ideal flow out in generous thought and benevolent service. Trained in the Church, embued with its spirit, quickened by its incentives, these are the people who go out to right the wrongs of society, to secure justice for the oppressed, and to build up the visible fabric of the kingdom of God.

The familiar clamor is for a coercive system of righteousness. Give us restrictive laws, give us legislation against the wicked heart, give us a new social mechanism, build up by statute a better physical environment, and then the lion and the lamb will lie down together. That is merely the shell of the millennial order. You cannot cure the timidity of the lamb or the cruelty of the lion by putting them together in a golden cage. They both need a change of heart, and it will take time and education and generations of lambs and lions before the cage will become an abode of peace.

The work of the Church is to breed a better disposition in the lion and more courage in the lamb. With all of these mechanics of reform the Church has no immediate or official connection. Its primary work is not to supply new social furniture or to manufacture golden cages or to bake bread or to heal the sick or to build almshouses or to purify politics. Its primary work is so to drive the ideal into the human soul that the millionaire shall be ashamed to grind the face of the poor, and the laborer shall be ashamed to rob his employer of honest service, and the prosperous man, looking into his unfortunate neighbor's yard, shall be ashamed not to vault the barrier and lay strenuous hands upon the wrong he

beholds. That is the redemptive work of the Church,— to make men and women righteously efficient, and to trust to them to go out with wisdom and consecration to improve in their own way the social conditions of the world. And in this respect the Church has abundantly justified itself. Read backward through history for a thousand years. Who are the men who have sweetened the waters of life and guided the currents of action into the safest channels?

Almost without exception they have been men who were trained under the influence of Christian ideals and drew their inspiration from the teachings of the Church of God. And the same thing is true to-day.

We are told that the great movements for the social betterment of mankind are outside of the Church. That is true, and that is exactly where they ought to be. But it is uttered as a reproach to the Church. Ask, then, who these people are who are working outside of the Church for better social conditions? They are people who were born into the Church. They are people who carry with them church ideals. They are people who lean on church encouragement, and who use the church power to realize their hopes and plans.

During the past winter some of us have listened to Dr. Grenfell as he told the story of his beautiful work on the barren coasts of Labrador. That work, for heroism and consecration, matches anything done by the Jesuit Fathers two hundred years ago in the Canadian wilderness. It is a splendid charity, but it lies beyond the province of the Church. For Dr. Grenfell is not a priest. He is not an ordained minister of the gospel. He is not an official missionary.

He is a plain, secular doctor of medicine who wants to help his fellow-men. And, patiently, bravely, hopefully, he has built up this goodwill enterprise that has carried health and gladness to those neglected people of the Northland. But Dr. Grenfell testifies that his first inspiration was derived from the Christian Church, and that the resolute motive that bore him through hardship and difficulty was drawn from the teachings of Jesus Christ. And that noble work is backed up and supported to-day by church people, holding in their hands the gifts of money and in their hearts the equal gifts of encouragement and sympathy.

And how many others can we name! The legion of strong souls who have been breathed upon by the spirit of the Church and are trying to realize their vision in the world's affairs! Think of those you know, whose faces are familiar, who sit with you at the fireside, whose lives are steadied and whose torches of service have been kindled at the altar fires of the Church. Think of the vast benevolences the country over,— the great schools for a backward race, the moral crusades, the two hundred charitable institutions in this city, — and learn that behind them all the great body of thinkers and workers and givers are men and women who have drunk deep at the sources of religious life and have received their inspiration from those spiritual truths for which the Church professedly stands.

We are therefore not to be alarmed when men rebuke the Church for not accepting their programmes of impatience or violence. We are not to suspect that it is behind the times because it runs not after

every humanitarian fad or fancy which this turbulent age is throwing to the surface.

We are not to imagine that the Church is dead in its sins because it is unwilling to abandon the language of the spirit and adopt the vocabulary of the agitator and doctrinaire. That, let us believe, is not the work it is called to do, and let us pray that it will never try to do it. Its mission is something more dignified and permanent than playing with expedients and experimenting with tools that were never intended for its use.

It is first to keep the light of the ideal burning clear and bright amid all confusion and storm and darkness, and then, by the glory of that ideal and by the sheer power of its loyalty to itself, to inspire men to go about doing good. In this field it stands alone, untroubled by temptations to forget the message which it has been commissioned to deliver. Here and here alone can it preserve its identity from age to age. Here and here alone can it serve in the largest way, maintain the confidence of sane people, and deserve the right to hold the keys of life.

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By James Martineau

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2; pages, 494; price, 75 cents *net;* postage, 12 cents.

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PIONEERS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA

Being the Great and Thursday Lectures Delivered in Boston in Nineteen Hundred and Three

Size, 5 1-2 x 8 inches; pages, 396; price, $1.50 *net;* postage, 13 cents.

THE purpose and scope of this volume cannot be better shown than by giving the subjects and authors of the thirteen chapters which make up its contents. These are: I. "William Brewster and the Independents," by Edwin D. Mead; II. "Roger Williams and the Doctrine of Soul Liberty," by W. H. P. Faunce; III. "Thomas Hooker and the Principle of Congregational Independency," by Williston Walker, IV "William Penn and the Gospel of th Inner Light," by Benjamin B. Trueblood; V. "Thomas Jefferson and the Influence of Democracy on Religion," by Thomas R. Slicer; VI. "William Ellery Channing and the Growth of Spiritual Christianity," by William W. Fenn; VII. "Horace Bushnell and Progressive Orthodoxy," by Washington Gladden; VIII. "Hosea Ballou and the Larger Hope," by John Coleman Adams; IX. "Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Teaching of the Divine Immanence," by Francis G. Peabody; X. "Theodore Parker and the Naturalization of Religion," by James Eells; XI. "Phillips Brooks and the Unity of the Spirit," by Samuel A. Eliot.

The chapters making up this book were delivered as lectures in Boston in the spring of 1903, and attracted much attention. The purpose of the lectures and of the book is to set forth some of the great principles through which religious freedom in this country was achieved, and the connection with these principles of the great men who advocated them and gave them their power and enduring vitality. These thirteen champions of religious freedom were truly pioneers in the work in which they became so conspicuous, and no one can so fully realize the significance of our present freedom of thought in religious matters as by reading these accounts of the inception and growth of the religious principles which constitute so valued a part of our religious inheritance.

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[No. 245]

CHRISTIANITY IS A LIFE

BY

REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D.

Library of the
PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

OUR FAITH

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS

SALVATION BY CHARACTER

THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND

ONWARD AND UPWARD FOREVER

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

CHRISTIANITY IS A LIFE.*

By their fruits shall ye know them.—MATTHEW vii. 20.

IT is five months since I have had the pleasure of meeting you here. In that time I have had unusual opportunity of seeing the religious practice and the religious life of America, and, what is a very different thing, of hearing the religious talk of America.

In the midst of the nation, I have heard, more than you have here, perhaps, a renewal of the discussions about creeds. What are they worth? Are they worth anything at all? Why do people have any creeds? And, above all, of what use are they in worship?

In reply to these questions it has been a favorite habit with our Unitarian leaders, now for half a century, to say that Christianity is a life, and not a creed. This is a good epigram which comes from James Martineau or William Ellery Channing. When one says this in public controversy, the quick answer comes: "Do you believe anything yourself? If you do, when you tell us this, that is your creed." But, as even he who says this knows, this smart reply is only a verbal repartee. When it is addressed to us Unitarians,— and it is addressed to us seriously in a frontier church like ours at Washington,— one says that precisely what the word "Unitarian" means is that God is Father and we are children, and that precisely what the Saviour tells us is to come to God as children come to Him, sure of His present love. If it is a creed to say that we seek God

* A sermon preached at All Souls' Church, Washington, a few months after Dr. Hale became Chaplain of the United States Senate.

and mean to find Him, that is our creed. If it is a creed to say that Jesus Christ teaches us this, that is our creed. But behind this is the fixed certainty that the Father is *now* with His children, *now*. The children seek Him *now*, and they find Him *now*. And Unitarians welcome every token they find and every word that they hear which insists on that gospel to which Jesus gave up his life; namely, that the Holy Spirit of God is with us whenever we seek it, that we are God's children and must go about our Father's business. And this is a matter of to-day and not of yesterday or of nineteen hundred years ago; and we need not talk if we will do.

It is, indeed, pathetic to see that the people of his own time treated him just as the great body of those who take his name treat him now. They cried, Lord, Lord, Lord, but they did not do the things that he said. On his part he protested, "Why do ye say Lord, Lord, and do not these things?"— action rather than talk.

And, as you have often heard me say here, it is an interesting thing that for a generation after he died what we call Christianity, or the Christian Religion, was simply called not by his name, but by the name "The Way." This meant not the manner or method, but, literally, *The* Road, as if there were no other road,— a simple road in which people were to travel. And, if people were to be judged at all, the question was how well they kept in this road. "The Way which men call heresy," Paul says proudly.*

* The Greek word is *hodos*, the road. It is not the method, as we might say, the way to learn to read is to learn your letters. It is the path or the road in which people walk or ride. If anybody cares, our word "road" comes from the same root.

In nineteen centuries of history, nineteen-twentieths of the ecclesiastics of the world, educated in the midst of books and fond of them, have come to feel, and so have said, that what Christianity wants is a good verbal statement of its purpose and system. Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, canons of fifteen councils, Decrees of the Council of Trent, Thirty-nine Articles, Five Points of Calvin, Westminster Confession, and, literally, a thousand more such "symbols"—symbols is the fashionable name just now—are monuments of the interest which the ecclesiastics of the world have taken and now take in such historical or verbal statements.

But all this time these formal statements never advanced one man or one woman an inch in The Way, or in the Christian or Divine Life. The Christian Life has been advanced when some freedman's widow on the Viminale took the orphan baby of a martyr into her cottage. It was advanced when Saint Vincent took the place of a criminal on the bench of a galley; when Philip Sidney, dying, gave a cup of water to the soldier in worse pain than he; or, the other day, when one of your own army surgeons gave his life, that the yellow fever might be abolished. And what we mean when we say that Christianity is a Life, and not a creed, is that our Christianity must be avouched, illustrated, and extended by action. We mean that, if Christianity is only expressed in creeds, it is as dead as a stereotype plate is, though it were a page of the Bible, when it is buried in a vault under the sidewalk.

But the leaders of liberal Christianity have never

been unwilling to accept the challenge. They say, and their followers say,— among whom I say,— that a sufficient definition of a Christian is following Christ, and that, if any man makes the effort to follow Christ, whether he expresses this in any formula of words or not, he is a Christian. I say still more, — that it is of no consequence whether he be called a Christian or not, so he be living in that divine spirit in which Jesus Christ lived. Why, he may be an inhabitant of a continent beyond the Antarctic ice, where the name of Jesus Christ was never heard and where he has been brought to this absolute knowledge of God by other means.

When we are pressed or asked if we cannot give in words a definition of what it is to follow Christ, we say we can. We interest ourselves, however, in seeing in how few words this can be said; and I may say, in passing, that it would seem as if the mechanical churches had devoted their attention to seeing how many words the same definition may require. I said to the late Freeman Clarke once that I had succeeded in bringing the verbal definition of Christianity into six words. He answered that he was in advance of me, for he had long since brought it down to four. His four words were, "Love God, love man." My six words were, "With God, for man, in heaven." I wanted, as you all here know, to say that Faith, Love, and Hope are the whole. Perhaps I might have been satisfied with Paul's statement, where he says, "These three abide and continue forever."

It is important to notice here that, when our Fathers here re-established the Church on its primitive basis, they saw the folly and danger of attempt-

ing verbal statement of opinion. They, therefore, abandoned written statement of doctrines. They had no creeds, as we call creeds, for a hundred and twenty years. No! they had covenants, in which people pledged themselves "to walk together in Christ." "It is not in our belief in a set of words, — it is in our action,— following him."

And here they did but follow his own great example when in parting from them he gives that symbol of union which has in fact united his followers from the beginning. What did he ask them to do? To repeat the same confession? Not a word of it. To make the same profession? Not a word of it. Is it those who can say the same answers to the same catechism? Alas! there is no catechism and there are no answers. No! the symbol of communion united Thomas who doubts and Peter who betrays. If only they can eat bread together, that is all. If they can pass the cup from hand to hand, that is all. They confess their weakness,— yes. They would fain remember him,— yes. And then, if they can recognize the mutual dependence of him who gives to his brother a bit of bread, of him who takes from his brother a cup of cold water, — these are the Saviour's tests of discipleship. There is no formula to repeat. There are no words to remember.

Now, when we say that Christianity is a life and not a creed, we mean that, whether a person can read a creed or not, whether he had been taught it in words or not, if he sees the Christian life, he can enter into it and follow it. We mean, as I said, just what the Saviour meant when he insisted upon action instead of expression. And it is very inter-

esting to see, in his own personal history, how closely he held himself to his own statement. Take that most pathetic conversation with the young nobleman of Edom. So far as verbal expression went, he and the Saviour were at one. The young man says, almost sadly, "I have kept the Ten Commandments" — that is, I have obeyed the written law — "from my youth up." Jesus tells him what is the one thing which he needs. The one thing he needs, it seems, is action. "Follow me; do as I do; lift up that which has fallen down, bring comfort where there is no comfort, make men see and know that the kingdom of God is at hand." All the established churches, when young men come to them who wish to be ministers of the gospel, say, "Yes, if you will go into such and such a school and study such and such languages and read such and such books, and pass an examination in those books, at the end of such and such a time, if you believe what we wish, we will give you a license which shall enable you to go out and say to all the world that the kingdom of God is at hand." But Jesus Christ took no such precautions for good grammar or for conservative utterance. He found some fishermen washing their nets. He did not say to them "learn anything," but he said, "Follow me." He found a man changing money at the tax-broker's stall, and he did not say to him "learn anything," but "Follow me." There is not the slightest indication that one of the twelve apostles had made any study whatever in the formulas of the Jewish Church or of the Christian Church that was to be. They were simply men who, as Jesus thought, had pluck and energy enough for the position to which he was to appoint them, who had followed so far that he knew something about them,

and whom he therefore appointed, because they were men of action, for the emergency.

To me it is at once pathetic and interesting to see how, in the face of its scholars and creed-makers, the Church in practice is, almost unwillingly, forced into the same statement if it means to preserve its existence. As Dr. Wayland said once, "Christianity has no defensive armor: it must be on the aggressive, or it is lost." This is absolutely true. What are called the evidences of Christianity become the defences of Christianity, and then, in that pathetic phrase of the last century, the "Apologies" for Christianity. On the other hand, ask any person, partial or impartial, where it is that he is interested in the written history of this religion, and you find that he has got hold of Xavier going from Europe to press the new life in Ceylon and Japan, you find he has some story of the Moravians planting their missions of love on the coast of Labrador or in the West Indies. Dr. Storrs, of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, said to me once, and I think said with truth, that, if the Congregational Church of New England had established its great missionary system earlier, he believed the Great Schism would have been prevented. By the "Great Schism" he meant the separation of that Congregational body into the two houses, Orthodox and Heterodox,— a separation which does not do any great harm, perhaps, but which certainly does not do a great deal of good. He meant, what he did not say, that, if the New England Church had shown herself in action in the period between 1810 and 1825, most men would have forgotten that rigmarole of the Five Points of Calvin,— rigmarole which leads to idolatry or to infidelity.

And so of any Christian saint,— those who fill the calendar of the Roman Church or those, perhaps, who belonged to no established church, people like John Milton or Roger Williams, whose names have not been written on the calendar of any ecclesiastical organization,— if they have done the things that the Lord said, if they have lived in his spirit, if they have followed in his way, they have wrought the miracle. There is another of Dr. Wayland's epigrams. Some one asked him, of one of his distinguished friends, if he thought that he were a Christian. His answer was: "Can he drive out the devils? If he can, he meets all my requisitions or the Master's." He referred of course to the passage in the Gospels where the disciples told Jesus that they had rebuked one whom they found casting out devils in his name. They rebuked him, as ecclesiastics rebuke such people to-day, "because he walketh not with us." And Jesus said: "Forbid him not. No man can work a miracle in my name, and lightly speak evil of me."

And the Master is willing that his church shall stand the test to which he leaves fisherman, apostle, young nobleman, and repentant sinner. It is the same test for kings and emperors and fishermen, for preachers and blacksmiths, for artists and dressmakers,— that simple test of thistles and vines and fig-trees. All of them, the emperor like the blacksmith, shall be judged by their fruits. The fishing-net and the Church will be judged by what they do. The doctrine will be judged by the life. The life will not be judged by the doctrine.

At this plan of his the doctrine-makers will always be dissatisfied. The men of words will skilfully twist words, to say it were better the other way. How

gladly would you and I get over the need of travelling ten miles on foot this morning if it would answer to say we have done it! But it will not answer. To live as one lives who knows that God is here has not proved to be easy. But to say, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth," proves very easy. Millions of men and women will say it in church to-day. And millions of them will go out, and in the street and at home and to-morrow in their day's work will act as if there were no God, no Father, and as if the earth had no Maker. The Saviour of mankind was not pleased with such lip service, and he said so. It is very easy to say, in rapid utterance, "I believe in His Son Jesus Christ, conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Millions of men will say this to-day in church, and will go out to borrow and lend, to earn money and spend it, to eat, to drink, to work, and to play, in such wise that no man who sees them could guess that Jesus Christ ever lived, that he ever said, "Blessed are the pure in heart," or that he ever said that "all the law and all the prophets hang on the words, Love God and love Man."

Such men do not believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God,—no, not though they say they do twenty times a day. And so for all wordy confessions. The Saviour of Mankind hated them, and said so. The Holy Spirit to-day testifies against them in every whisper of our hearts, in every voice of our time. God is not pleased when men say and do not. Let them show their belief, not by their words, but by their fruits. Religion is not a creed, but a life. By their fruits shall ye know them.

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[No. 246]

THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

Library of the
PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

BY

CHARLES W. ELIOT

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church

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THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE [1]

As students in this summer's School of Theology you have attended a series of lectures on fluctuations in religious interest, on the frequent occurrence of religious declines followed soon by recoveries or regenerations both within and without the churches, on the frequent attempts to bring the prevalent religious doctrines into harmony with new tendencies in the intellectual world, on the constant struggle between conservatism and liberalism in existing churches and between idealism and materialism in society at large, on the effects of popular education and the modern spirit of inquiry on religious doctrines and organizations, on the changed views of thinking people concerning the nature of the world and of man, on the increase of knowledge as affecting religion, and on the new ideas of God. You have also listened to lectures on psychotherapy, a new development of an ancient tendency to mix religion with medicine, and on the theory of evolution, a modern scientific doctrine which within fifty years has profoundly modified the religious conceptions and expectations of many thinking people. You have heard, too, how the new ideas of democracy and social progress have modified and ought to modify not only the actual work done by the churches, but the whole conception of the func-

[1] A lecture delivered at the close of the Eleventh Session of the Harvard Summer School of Theology, July 22, 1909.

tion of churches. Again, you have heard how many and how profound are the religious implications in contemporary philosophy. Your attention has been called to the most recent views concerning the conservation of energy in the universe, to the wonderful phenomena of radio-activity, and to the most recent definitions of atom, molecule, ion, and electron — human imaginings which have much to do with the modern conceptions of matter and spirit. The influence on popular religion of modern scholarship applied to the New Testament has also engaged your attention; and, finally, you have heard an exposition of religious conditions and practices in the United States which assumed an intimate connection between the advance of civilization and the contemporaneous aspects of religions, and illustrated from history the service of religion — and particularly of Christianity — to the progress of civilization through its contributions to individual freedom, intellectual culture, and social coöperation.

The general impression you have received from this comprehensive survey must surely be that religion is not a fixed, but a fluent thing. It is, therefore, wholly natural and to be expected that the conceptions of religion prevalent among educated people should change from century to century. Modern studies in comparative religion and in the history of religions demonstrate that such has been the case in times past. Now the nineteenth century immeasurably surpassed all preceding centuries in the increase of knowledge, and in the spread of the spirit of scientific inquiry and of the passion for truth-seeking. Hence the changes in religious beliefs and practices, and in the relation of churches to human society as

a whole, were much deeper and more extensive in that century than ever before in the history of the world; and the approach made to the embodiment in the actual practices of mankind of the doctrines of the greatest religious teachers was more significant and more rapid than ever before. The religion of a multitude of humane persons in the twentieth century may, therefore, be called without inexcusable exaggeration a "new religion,"— not that a single one of its doctrines and practices is really new in essence, but only that the wider acceptance and better actual application of truths familiar in the past at many times and places, but never taken to heart by the multitude or put in force on a large scale, are new. I shall attempt to state without reserve and in simplest terms free from technicalities, first, what the religion of the future seems likely not to be, and secondly, what it may reasonably be expected to be. My point of view is that of an American layman, whose observing and thinking life has covered the extraordinary period since the *Voyage of the Beagle* was published, anæsthesia and the telegraph came into use, Herbert Spencer issued his first series of papers on evolution, Kuenen, Robertson Smith, and Wellhausen developed and vindicated Biblical criticism, J. S. Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* appeared, and the United States by going to war with Mexico set in operation the forces which abolished slavery on the American continent — the period within which mechanical power came to be widely distributed through the explosive engine and the applications of electricity, and all the great fundamental industries of civilized mankind were reconstructed.

(1) The religion of the future will not be based on authority, either spiritual or temporal. The decline of reliance upon absolute authority is one of the most significant phenomena of the modern world. This decline is to be seen everywhere,— in government, in education, in the church, in business, and in the family. The present generation is willing, and indeed often eager, to be led; but it is averse to being driven, and it wants to understand the grounds and sanctions of authoritative decisions. As a rule, the Christian churches, Roman, Greek, and Protestant, have heretofore relied mainly upon the principle of authority, the Reformation having substituted for an authoritative church an authoritative book; but it is evident that the authority both of the most authoritative churches and of the Bible as a verbally inspired guide is already greatly impaired, and that the tendency towards liberty is progressive, and among educated men irresistible.

(2) It is hardly necessary to say that in the religion of the future there will be no personifications of the primitive forces of nature, such as light, fire, frost, wind, storm, and earthquake, although primitive religions and the actual religions of barbarous or semi-civilized peoples abound in such personifications. The mountains, groves, volcanoes, and oceans will no longer be inhabited by either kindly or malevolent deities; although man will still look to the hills for rest, still find in the ocean a symbol of infinity, and refreshment and delight in the forests and the streams. The love of nature mounts and spreads, while faith in fairies, imps, nymphs, demons, and angels declines and fades away.

(3) There will be in the religion of the future

no worship, express or implied, of dead ancestors, teachers, or rulers; no more tribal, racial, or tutelary gods; no identification of any human being, however majestic in character, with the Eternal Deity. In these respects the religion of the future will not be essentially new, for nineteen centuries ago Jesus said, "Neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." It should be recognized, however, first, that Christianity was soon deeply affected by the surrounding paganism, and that some of these pagan intrusions have survived to this day; and secondly, that the Hebrew religion, the influence of which on the Christian has been, and is, very potent, was in the highest degree a racial religion, and its Holy of Holies was local. In war-times, that is, in times when the brutal or savage instincts remaining in humanity become temporarily dominant, and good-will is limited to people of the same nation, the survival of a tribal or national quality in institutional Christianity comes out very plainly. The aid of the Lord of Hosts is still invoked by both parties to international warfare, and each side praises and thanks Him for its successes. Indeed, the same spirit has often been exhibited in civil wars caused by religious differences.

> "Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from whom all glories are!
> And glory to our sovereign liege, King Henry of Navarre!"

It is not many years since an Archbishop of Canterbury caused thanks to be given in all Anglican churches that the Lord of Hosts had been in the English camp over against the Egyptians. Hereto-

fore the great religions of the world have held out hopes of direct interventions of the deity, or some special deity, in favor of his faithful worshippers. It was the greatest Jewish prophets who told King Hezekiah that the King of Assyria, who had approached Jerusalem with a great army, should not come into the city nor shoot an arrow there, and reported the Lord as saying, "I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake." "And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." The new religion cannot promise that sort of aid to either nations or individuals in peril.

(4) In the religious life of the future the primary object will not be the personal welfare or safety of the individual in this world or any other. That safety, that welfare or salvation, may be incidentally secured, but it will not be the prime object in view. The religious person will not think of his own welfare or security, but of service to others, and of contributions to the common good. The new religion will not teach that character is likely to be suddenly changed, either in this world or in any other, — although in any world a sudden opportunity for improvement may present itself, and the date of that opportunity may be a precious remembrance. The new religion will not rely on either a sudden conversion in this world or a sudden paradise in the next, from out a sensual, selfish, or dishonest life. It will teach that repentance wipes out nothing in

the past, and is only the first step towards reformation, and a sign of a better future.

(5) The religion of the future will not be propitiatory, sacrificial, or expiatory. In primitive society fear of the supernal powers, as represented in the awful forces of nature, was the root of religion. These dreadful powers must be propitiated or placated, and they must be propitiated by sacrifices in the most literal sense; and the supposed offenses of man must be expiated by sufferings, which were apt to be vicarious. Even the Hebrews offered human sacrifices for generations; and always a great part of their religious rites consisted in sacrifices of animals. The Christian church made a great step forward when it substituted the burning of incense for the burning of bullocks and doves; but to this day there survives not only in the doctrines but in the practices of the Christian church the principle of expiatory sacrifice. It will be an immense advance if twentieth-century Christianity can be purified from all these survivals of barbarous, or semi-barbarous, religious conceptions, because they imply such an unworthy idea of God.

(6) The religion of the future will not perpetuate the Hebrew anthropomorphic representations of God, conceptions which were carried in large measure into institutional Christianity. It will not think of God as an enlarged and glorified man, who walks "in the garden in the cool of the day," or as a judge deciding between human litigants, or as a king, Pharaoh, or emperor, ruling arbitrarily his subjects, or as the patriarch who, in the early history of the race, ruled his family absolutely. These human functions will

cease to represent adequately the attributes of God. The nineteenth century has made all these conceptions of deity look archaic and crude.

(7) The religion of the future will not be gloomy, ascetic, or maledictory. It will not deal chiefly with sorrow and death, but with joy and life. It will not care so much to account for the evil and the ugly in the world as to interpret the good and the beautiful. It will believe in no malignant powers — neither in Satan nor in witches, neither in the evil eye nor in the malign suggestion. When its disciple encounters a wrong or evil in the world, his impulse will be to search out its origin, source, or cause, that he may attack it at its starting-point. He may not speculate on the origin of evil in general, but will surely try to discover the best way to eradicate the particular evil or wrong he has recognized.

Having thus considered what the religion of the future will not be, let us now consider what its positive elements will be.

The new thought of God will be its most characteristic element. This ideal will comprehend the Jewish Jehovah, the Christian Universal Father, the modern physicist's omnipresent and exhaustless Energy, and the biological conception of a Vital Force. The Infinite Spirit pervades the universe, just as the spirit of a man pervades his body, and acts, consciously or unconsciously, in every atom of it. The twentieth century will accept literally and implicitly St. Paul's statement, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being," and God is that vital atmosphere, or incessant inspiration. The new religion is therefore thoroughly monotheistic, its God

being the one infinite force; but this one God is not withdrawn or removed, but indwelling, and especially dwelling in every living creature. God is so absolutely immanent in all things, animate and inanimate, that no mediation is needed between him and the least particle of his creation. In his moral attributes, he is for every man the multiplication to infinity of all the noblest, tenderest, and most potent qualities which that man has ever seen or imagined in a human being. In this sense every man makes his own picture of God. Every age, barbarous or civilized, happy or unhappy, improving or degenerating, frames its own conception of God within the limits of its own experiences and imaginings. In this sense, too, a humane religion has to wait for a humane generation. The central thought of the new religion will therefore be a humane and worthy idea of God, thoroughly consistent with the nineteenth-century revelations concerning man and nature, and with all the tenderest and loveliest teachings which have come down to us from the past.

The scientific doctrine of one omnipresent, eternal Energy, informing and inspiring the whole creation at every instant of time and throughout the infinite spaces, is fundamentally and completely inconsistent with the dualistic conception which sets spirit over against matter, good over against evil, man's wickedness against God's righteousness, and Satan against Christ. The doctrine of God's immanence is also inconsistent with the conception that he once set the universe a-going, and then withdrew, leaving the universe to be operated under physical laws, which were his vicegerents or substitutes. If God is thoroughly immanent in the entire creation, there can be no

"secondary causes," in either the material or the spiritual universe. The new religion rejects absolutely the conception that man is an alien in the world, or that God is alienated from the world. It rejects also the entire conception of man as a fallen being, hopelessly wicked, and tending downward by nature; and it makes this emphatic rejection of long-accepted beliefs because it finds them all inconsistent with a humane, civilized, or worthy idea of God.

If, now, man discovers God through self-consciousness, or, in other words, if it is the human soul through which God is revealed, the race has come to the knowledge of God through knowledge of itself; and the best knowledge of God comes through knowledge of the best of the race. Men have always attributed to man a spirit distinct from his body, though immanent in it. No one of us is willing to identify himself with his body; but on the contrary every one now believes, and all men have believed, that there is in a man an animating, ruling, characteristic essence, or spirit, which is himself. This spirit, dull or bright, petty or grand, pure or foul, looks out of the eyes, sounds in the voice, and appears in the bearing and manners of each individual. It is something just as real as the body, and more characteristic. To every influential person it gives far the greater part of his power. It is what we call the personality. This spirit, or soul, is the most effective part of every human being, and is recognized as such, and always has been. It can use a fine body more effectively than it can a poor body, but it can do wonders through an inadequate body. In the crisis of a losing battle, it is a human soul that rallies the flying troops. It looks out of flashing

eyes, and speaks in ringing tones, but its appeal is to other souls, and not to other bodies. In the midst of terrible natural catastrophes,— earthquakes, storms, conflagrations, volcanic eruptions,— when men's best works are being destroyed and thousands of lives are ceasing suddenly and horribly, it is not a few especially good human bodies which steady the survivors, maintain order, and organize the forces of rescue and relief. It is a few superior souls. The leading men and women in any society, savage or civilized, are the strongest personalities,— the personality being primarily spiritual, and only secondarily bodily. Recognizing to the full these simple and obvious facts, the future religion will pay homage to all righteous and loving persons who in the past have exemplified, and made intelligible to their contemporaries, intrinsic goodness and effluent goodwill. It will be an all-saints religion. It will treasure up all tales of human excellence and virtue. It will reverence the discoverers, teachers, martyrs, and apostles of liberty, purity, and righteousness. It will respect and honor all strong and lovely human beings, — seeing in them in finite measure qualities similar to those which they adore in God. Recognizing in every great and lovely human person an individual will-power which is the essence of the personality, it will naturally and inevitably attribute to God a similar individual will-power, the essence of his infinite personality. In this simple and natural faith there will be no place for metaphysical complexities or magical rites, much less for obscure dogmas, the result of compromises in turbulent conventions. It is anthropomorphic; but what else can a human view of God's personality be? The finite can study and

describe the infinite only through analogy, parallelism, and simile; but that is a good way. The new religion will animate and guide ordinary men and women who are putting into practice religious conceptions which result directly from their own observation and precious experience of tenderness, sympathy, trust, and solemn joy. It will be most welcome to the men and women who cherish and exhibit incessant, all-comprehending good-will. These are the "good" people. These are the only genuinely civilized persons.

To the wretched, sick, and downtrodden of the earth, religion has in the past held out hopes of future compensation. When precious ties of affection have been broken, religion has held out prospects of immediate and eternal blessings for the departed; and has promised happy reunions in another and a better world. To a human soul, lodged in an imperfect, feeble, or suffering body, some of the older religions have held out the expectation of deliverance by death, and of entrance upon a rich, competent, and happy life,— in short, for present human ills, however crushing, the widely accepted religions have offered either a second life, presumably immortal, under the happiest conditions, or at least peace, rest, and a happy oblivion. Can the future religion promise that sort of compensation for the ills of this world, any more than it can promise miraculous aid against threatened disaster? A candid reply to this inquiry involves the statement that in the future religion there will be nothing "supernatural." This does not mean that life will be stripped of mystery or wonder, or that the range of natural law has been finally determined; but that religion, like all else,

must conform to natural law so far as the range of law has been determined. In this sense the religion of the future will be a natural religion. In all its theory and all its practice it will be completely natural. It will place no reliance on any sort of magic, or miracle, or other violation of, or exception to, the laws of nature. It will perform no magical rites, use no occult processes, count on no abnormal interventions of supernal powers, and admit no possession of supernatural gifts, whether transmitted or conferred, by any tribe, class, or family of men. Its sacraments will be, not invasions of law by miracle, but the visible signs of a natural spiritual grace, or of a natural hallowed custom. It may preserve historical rites and ceremonies, which, in times past, have represented the expectation of magical or miraculous effects; but it will be content with natural interpretations of such rites and ceremonies. Its priests will be men especially interested in religious thought, possessing unusual gifts of speech on devotional subjects, and trained in the best methods of improving the social and industrial conditions of human life. There will always be need of such public teachers and spiritual leaders, heralds, and prophets. It should be observed, however, that many happenings and processes which were formerly regarded as supernatural have, with the increase of knowledge, come to be regarded as completely natural. The line between the supposed natural and the supposed supernatural is, therefore, not fixed but changeable.

It is obvious, therefore, that the completely natural quality of the future religion excludes from it many of the religious compensations and consolations of the

past. Twentieth-century soldiers, going into battle, will not be able to say to each other, as Moslem soldiers did in the tenth century, "If we are killed today, we shall meet again tonight in Paradise." Even now, the mother who loses her babe, or the husband his wife, by a preventable disease, is seldom able to say simply, "It is the will of God! The babe — or the woman — is better off in heaven than on earth. I resign this dear object of love and devotion, who has gone to a happier world." The ordinary consolations of institutional Christianity no longer satisfy intelligent people whose lives are broken by the sickness or premature death of those they love. The new religion will not attempt to reconcile men and women to present ills by promises of future blessedness, either for themselves or for others. Such promises have done infinite mischief in the world, by inducing men to be patient under sufferings or deprivations against which they should have incessantly struggled. The advent of a just freedom for the mass of mankind has been delayed for centuries by just this effect of compensatory promises issued by churches.

The religion of the future will approach the whole subject of evil from another side, that of resistance and prevention. The Breton sailor, who had had his arm poisoned by a dirty fish-hook which had entered his finger, made a votive offering at the shrine of the Virgin Mary, and prayed for a cure. The workman today, who gets cut or bruised by a rough or dirty instrument, goes to a surgeon, who applies an antiseptic dressing to the wound, and prevents the poisoning. That surgeon is one of the ministers of the new religion. When dwellers in a slum suffer the famil-

iar evils caused by overcrowding, impure food, and cheerless labor, the modern true believers contend against the sources of such misery by providing public baths, playgrounds, wider and cleaner streets, better dwellings, and more effective schools,—that is they attack the sources of physical and moral evil. The new religion cannot supply the old sort of consolation; but it can diminish the need of consolation, or reduce the number of occasions for consolation.

A further change in religious thinking has already occurred on the subject of human pain. Pain was generally regarded as a punishment for sin, or as a means of moral training, or as an expiation, vicarious or direct. Twentieth-century religion, gradually perfected in this respect during the last half of the nineteenth century, regards human pain as an evil to be relieved and prevented by the promptest means possible, and by any sort of available means, physical, mental, or moral; and, thanks to the progress of biological and chemical science, there is comparatively little physical pain nowadays which cannot be prevented or relieved. The invention of anæsthetics has brought into contempt the expiatory, or penal, view of human pain in this world. The younger generations listen with incredulous smiles to the objection made only a little more than sixty years ago by some divines of the Scottish Presbyterian church to the employment of chloroform in childbirth, namely, that the physicians were interfering with the execution of a curse pronounced by the Almighty. Dr. Wier Mitchell, a physician who has seen much of mental pain as well as of bodily, in his poem read at the fiftieth anniversary of the first public demonstration of surgical anæsthesia, said of pain:

"What purpose hath it? Nay, thy quest is vain:
Earth hath no answer: If the baffled brain
Cries, 'Tis to warn, to punish, Ah, refrain!
When writhes the child, beneath the surgeon's hand,
What soul shall hope that pain to understand?
Lo! Science falters o'er the hopeless task,
And Love and Faith in vain an answer ask." . . .

A similar change is occurring in regard to the conception of divine justice. The evils in this world have been regarded as penalties inflicted by a just God on human beings who had violated his laws; and the justice of God played a great part in his imagined dealings with the human race. A young graduate of Andover Theological Seminary once told me that when he had preached two or three times in summer in a small Congregational church on Cape Cod, one of the deacons of the church said to him at the close of the service, "What sort of sentimental mush is this that they are teaching you at Andover? You talk every Sunday about the love of God; we want to hear about his justice." The future religion will not undertake to describe, or even imagine, the justice of God. We are today so profoundly dissatisfied with human justice, although it is the result of centuries of experience of social good and ill in this world, that we may well distrust human capacity to conceive of the justice of a morally perfect, infinite being. The civilized nations now recognize the fact that legal punishments usually fail of their objects, or cause wrongs and evils greater than those for which the punishments were inflicted; so that penology, or the science of penalties, has still to be created. It is only very lately that the most civilized communities began to learn how to deal with criminal tendencies in the young. In the eyes of God

human beings must all seem very young. Since our ideas of God's modes of thinking and acting are necessarily based on the best human attainments in similar directions, the new religion cannot pretend to understand God's justice, inasmuch as there is no human experience of public justice fit to serve as the foundation for a true conception of God's. The new religion will magnify and laud God's love and compassion, and will not venture to state what the justice of God may, or may not, require of himself, or of any of his finite creatures. This will be one of the great differences between the future religion and the past. Institutional Christianity as a rule condemned the mass of mankind to eternal torment; partly because the leaders of the churches thought they understood completely the justice of God, and partly because the exclusive possession of means of deliverance gave the churches some restraining influence over even the boldest sinners, and much over the timid. The new religion will make no such pretensions, and will teach no such horrible and perverse doctrines.

Do you ask what consolation for human ills the new religion will offer? I answer, the consolation which often comes to the sufferer from being more serviceable to others than he was before the loss or the suffering for which consolation is needed; the consolation of being one's self wiser and tenderer than before, and therefore more able to be serviceable to human kind in the best ways; the consolation through the memory, which preserves the sweet fragrance of characters and lives no longer in presence, recalls the joys and achievements of those lives while still within mortal view, and treasures up and multi-

plies the good influences they exerted. Moreover, such a religion has no tendency to diminish the force in this world, or any other, of the best human imaginings concerning the nature of the infinite Spirit immanent in the universe. It urges its disciples to believe that as the best and happiest man is he who best loves and serves, so the soul of the universe finds its perfect bliss and efficiency in supreme and universal love and service. It sees evidence in the moral history of the human race that a loving God rules the universe. Trust in this supreme rule is genuine consolation and support under many human trials and sufferings. Nevertheless, although brave and patient endurance of evil is always admirable, and generally happier than timid or impatient conduct under suffering or wrong, it must be admitted that endurance or constancy is not consolation, and that there are many physical and mental disabilities and injuries for which there is no consolation in a literal sense. Human skill may mitigate or palliate some of them, human sympathy and kindness may make them more bearable, but neither religion nor philosophy offers any complete consolation for them, or ever has.

In thus describing the consolations for human woes and evils which such a religion can offer, its chief motives have been depicted. They are just those which Jesus said summed up all the commandments, love toward God and brotherliness to man. It will teach a universal good-will, under the influence of which men will do their duty, and at the same time, promote their own happiness. The devotees of a religion of service will always be asking what they can contribute to the common good; but their greatest

service must always be to increase the stock of good-will among men. One of the worst chronic human evils is working for daily bread without any interest in the work, and with ill-will towards the institution or person that provides the work. The work of the world must be done; and the great question is, shall it be done happily or unhappily? Much of it is today done unhappily. The new religion will contribute powerfully toward the reduction of this mass of unnecessary misery, and will do so chiefly by promoting good-will among men.

A paganized Hebrew-Christianity has unquestionably made much of personal sacrifice as a religious duty. The new religion will greatly qualify the supposed duty of sacrifice, and will regard all sacrifices as unnecessary and injurious, except those which love dictates and justifies. "Greater *love* hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Self-sacrifice is not a good or a merit in itself; it must be intelligent and loving to be meritorious, and the object in view must be worth its price. Giving up attractive pleasures or labors in favor of some higher satisfaction, or some engrossing work, is not self-sacrifice. It is a renunciation of inferior or irrelevant objects in favor of one superior object; it is only the intelligent inhibition of whatever distracts from the main pursuit, or the worthiest task. Here, again, the new religion will teach that happiness goes with dutifulness even in this world.

All the religions have been, to a greater or less extent, uplifting and inspiring, in the sense that they raised men's thoughts to some power above them, to some being or beings, which had more power and more duration than the worshippers had. When

kings or emperors were deified, they were idealized, and so lifted men's thoughts out of the daily round of their ordinary lives. As the objects of worship became nobler, purer, and kinder with the progress of civilization, the prevailing religion became more stimulating to magnanimity and righteousness. Will the future religion be as helpful to the spirit of man? Will it touch his imagination as the anthropomorphism of Judaism, polytheism, Islam, and paganized Christianity have done? Can it be as moving to the human soul as the deified powers of nature, the various gods and goddesses that inhabited sky, ocean, mountains, groves, and streams, or the numerous deities revered in the various Christian communions, — God the Father, the Son of God, the Mother of God, the Holy Ghost, and the host of tutelary saints? All these objects of worship have greatly moved the human soul, and have inspired men to thoughts and deeds of beauty, love, and duty. Will the new religion do as much? It is reasonable to expect that it will. The sentiments of awe and reverence, and the love of beauty and goodness, will remain, and will increase in strength and influence. All the natural human affections will remain in full force. The new religion will foster powerfully a virtue which is comparatively new in the world — the love of truth and the passion for seeking it, and the truth will progressively make men free; so that the coming generations will be freer, and therefore more productive and stronger than the preceding. The new religionists will not worship their ancestors; but they will have a stronger sense of the descent of the present from the past than men have ever had before, and

each generation will feel more strongly than ever before its indebtedness to the preceding.

The two sentiments which most inspire men to good deeds are love and hope. Religion should give freer and more rational play to these two sentiments than the world has heretofore witnessed; and the love and hope will be thoroughly grounded in and on efficient, serviceable, visible, actual, and concrete deeds and conduct. When a man works out a successful treatment for cerebro-spinal meningitis — a disease before which medicine was absolutely helpless a dozen years ago — by applying to the discovery of a remedy ideas and processes invented or developed by other men studying other diseases, he does a great work of love, prevents for the future the breaking of innumerable ties of love, and establishes good grounds for hope of many like benefits for human generations to come. The men who do such things in the present world are ministers of the religion of the future. The future religion will prove, has proved, as effective as any of the older ones in inspiring men to love and serve their fellow-beings,— and that is the true object and end of all philosophies and all religions; for that is the way to make men better and happier, alike the servants and the served.

The future religion will have the attribute of universality and of adaptability to the rapidly increasing stores of knowledge and power over nature acquired by the human race. As the religion of a child is inevitably very different from that of an adult, and must grow up with the child, so the religion of a race whose capacities are rapidly enlarging must be capable of a corresponding development. The re-

ligion of any single individual ought to grow up with him all the way from infancy to age; and the same is true of the religion of a race. It is bad for any people to stand still in their governmental conceptions and practices, or in the organization of their industries, or in any of their arts or trades, even the oldest; but it is much worse for a people to stand still in their religious conceptions and practices. Now, the new religion affords an indefinite scope, or range, for progress and development. It rejects all the limitations of family, tribal, or national religion. It is not bound to any dogma, creed, book, or institution. It has the whole world for the field of the loving labors of its disciples; and its fundamental precept of serviceableness admits an infinite variety and range in both time and space. It is very simple, and therefore possesses an important element of durability. It is the complicated things that get out of order. Its symbols will not relate to sacrifice or dogma; but it will doubtless have symbols, which will represent its love of liberty, truth, and beauty. It will also have social rites and reverent observances; for it will wish to commemorate the good thoughts and deeds which have come down from former generations. It will have its saints; but its canonizations will be based on grounds somewhat new. It will have its heroes; but they must have shown a loving, disinterested, or protective courage. It will have its communions, with the Great Spirit, with the spirits of the departed, and with living fellow-men of like minds. Working together will be one of its fundamental ideas,—of men with God, of men with prophets, leaders, and teachers, of men with one another, of men's intelligence with the forces of

nature. It will teach only such uses of authority as are necessary to secure the coöperation of several or many people to one end; and the discipline it will advocate will be training in the development of co-operative good-will.

Will such a religion as this make progress in the twentieth-century world? You have heard in this Summer School of Theology much about the conflict between materialism and religious idealism, the revolt against long-accepted dogmas, the frequent occurrence of waves of reform, sweeping through and sometimes over the churches, the effect of modern philosophy, ethical theories, social hopes, and democratic principles on the established churches, and the abandonment of churches altogether by a large proportion of the population in countries mainly Protestant. You know, too, how other social organizations have, in some considerable measure, taken the place of churches. Millions of Americans find in Masonic organizations, lodges of Odd Fellows and fraternal societies, granges, and trades-unions, at once their practical religion, and the satisfaction of their social needs. So far as these multifarious organizations carry men and women out of their individual selves, and teach them mutual regard and social and industrial coöperation, they approach the field and functions of the religion of the future. The Spiritualists, Christian Scientists, and mental healers of all sorts manifest a good deal of ability to draw people away from the traditional churches, and to discredit traditional dogmas and formal creeds. Nevertheless, the great mass of the people remain attached to the traditional churches, and are likely to remain so,— partly because of their tender asso-

ciations with churches in the grave crises of life, and partly because their actual mental condition still permits them to accept the beliefs they have inherited or been taught while young. The new religion will therefore make but slow progress, so far as outward organization goes. It will, however, progressively modify the creeds and religious practices of all the existing churches, and change their symbolism and their teachings concerning the conduct of life. Since its chief doctrine is the doctrine of a sublime unity of substance, force, and spirit, and its chief precept is, Be serviceable, it will exert a strong uniting influence among men.

Christian unity has always been longed for by devout believers, but has been sought in impossible ways. Authoritative churches have tried to force everybody within their range to hold the same opinions and unite in the same observances, but they have won only temporary and local successes. As freedom has increased in the world, it has become more and more difficult to enforce even outward conformity; and in countries where church and state have been separated, a great diversity of religious opinions and practices has been expressed in different religious organizations, each of which commands the effective devotion of a fraction of the population. Since it is certain that men are steadily gaining more and more freedom in thought, speech, and action, civilized society might as well assume that it will be quite impossible to unite all religiously-minded people through any dogma, creed, ceremony, observance, or ritual. All these are divisive, not uniting, wherever a reasonable freedom exists. The new religion proposes as a basis of unity, first, its doctrine of an immanent

and loving God, and secondly, its precept, Be serviceable to fellow-men. Already there are many signs in the free countries of the world that different religious denominations can unite in good work to promote human welfare. The support of hospitals, dispensaries, and asylums by persons connected with all sorts of religious denominations, the union of all denominations in carrying on Associated Charities in large cities, the success of the Young Men's Christian Associations, and the numerous efforts to form federations of kindred churches for practical purposes, all testify to the feasibility of extensive coöperation in good works. Again, the new religion cannot create any caste, ecclesiastical class, or exclusive sect founded on a rite. On these grounds it is not unreasonable to imagine that the new religion will prove a unifying influence, and a strong reinforcement of democracy.

Whether it will prove as efficient to deter men from doing wrong and to encourage them to do right as the prevailing religions have been, is a question which only experience can answer. In these two respects neither the threats nor the promises of the older religions have been remarkably successful in society at large. The fear of hell has not proved effective to deter men from wrong-doing, and heaven has never yet been described in terms very attractive to the average man or woman. Both are indeed unimaginable. The great geniuses, like Dante and Swedenborg, have produced only fantastic and incredible pictures of either state. The modern man would hardly feel any appreciable loss of motive-power toward good or away from evil if heaven were burnt and hell quenched. The prevailing Christian con-

ceptions of heaven and hell have hardly any more influence with educated people in these days than Olympus and Hades have. The modern mind craves an immediate motive or leading, good for today on this earth. The new religion builds on the actual experience of men and women, and of human society as a whole. The motive powers it relies on have been, and are, at work in innumerable human lives; and its beatific visions and its hopes are better grounded than those of traditional religion, and finer, — because free from all selfishness, and from the imagery of governments, courts, social distinctions, and war.

Finally, this twentieth-century religion is not only to be in harmony with the great secular movements of modern society — democracy, individualism, social idealism, the zeal for education, the spirit of research, the modern tendency to welcome the new, the fresh powers of preventive medicine, and the recent advances in business and industrial ethics — but also in essential agreement with the direct, personal teachings of Jesus, as they are reported in the Gospels. The revelation he gave to mankind thus becomes more wonderful than ever.

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IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

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IT UNITES the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

For the maintenance of these endeavors the Association depends upon the annual contributions of the churches and the friends of the cause. Contributions should be sent to the **Treasurer of the Association at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.**

[No. 247]

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

BY

REV. CHRISTOPHER J. STREET

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD
THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS
SALVATION BY CHARACTER
THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND
ONWARD AND UPWARD FOREVER

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

'Save thyself, O Soul; be and do what is holy, and just, and right, and true, and pure; then the Almighty himself will save and absolve thee. This is the only safety, the only absolution. We pray, but do not strive sufficiently: we grovel in the dust, instead of straining manfully: we clamour for some new revealing, as if the eternal revealing were not now, as ever, close at hand, at our doors indeed, and in our very midst.' — *Dr. Henry MacCormac: 'Conversation of a Soul with God,'* p. 66.

THE question which the terrified gaoler asked of Paul and Silas (Acts xvi. 30) is asked with equal horror by many a timid soul to-day. Yet why this fear and trembling, this agonized beseeching? What cause is there for being afraid? Why do men view with dread the approaching hour of death and its accompanying judgment at the throne of God? What means the poor wretch who shivers at the thought of death, and wrings his hands as he despairingly cries — What must I do to be saved? Saved! Saved from what? Does he think he is lost: and if so, lost to what? What has he lost? How is he lost? — All these questions must first be considered before we can answer the question he puts to us — "What must I do to be saved?"

And the answer in most cases is — what? I have lost the hope of Heaven. I want to be saved from an Endless Hell. What must I do to escape from this dreadful doom? How can I be saved from the wrath of God, and the terrible vengeance he will take on me? Dean Farrar has told us what the popular

notion of Hell is. "Many of us," he says, "were scared with it, horrified with it, perhaps almost maddened by it in our childhood. It is that, the moment a human being dies — at whatever age, under whatever disadvantages — his fate is sealed finally and for ever; and that, if he die in unrepented sin, that fate is a never-ending agony, amid physical tortures the most frightful that can be imagined; so that, when we think of the future of the human race, we must conceive of a vast and burning prison, in which the lost souls of millions and millions writhe and shriek for ever, tormented in a flame that never will be quenched . . . Many true and loving Christians have, I know, held these views, and have mourned with aching hearts over what seemed to them the fatal necessity for believing them. But others, less good and less pure, have *exulted* in them, and I know nothing more calculated to make the whole soul revolt with loathing from every doctrine of religion than the evil complacency with which some cheerfully accept the belief that they are living and moving in the midst of millions doomed irreversibly to everlasting perdition . . . I repudiate these crude and glaring travesties of the awful and holy will of God; I arraign them as ignorantly merciless; I impeach them as a falsehood against Christ's universal and absolute redemption; I denounce them as a blasphemy against God's exceeding and eternal love!" (*Eternal Hope*, pp. 55–72, 1878 Edition.)

How then shall I answer the man, who, haunted by the dread of Hell, asks me to show him a way of salvation? Break away from the superstition that enthrals you, my friend! Open your eyes to the

love of God manifesting itself all around you. See the brightness and speaking beauty of Nature, all telling of the loving care of the Infinite God. Think of the blessings and mercies that have been showered on your life — the hopes, the love, the sympathy, that have enriched you — the merciful Providence that has sustained you in health and strength thus far on your earthly pilgrimage; and then go down on your knees and beg forgiveness from him who is mercy, truth, and love, for the slanders you have spoken against him, for the terrible caricature you have drawn of him, for the unworthy thoughts you have had about him. Banish the "old wives' fables" of gloomy theologians to the obscurity and contempt they deserve. Let the lake of fire and brimstone burn itself out, and be no more: let the stern frown of your angry God unbend into the winning smile of a God of unspeakable tenderness; and learn that there is pardon for every sinner who will cast away his sin and seek after righteousness. If you come to me with your gloomy travesty upon religion and ask in terror "What must I do to be saved?" I can only say that I deplore the injustice you are doing to God and your own nature, and hope devoutly that some day the rays of reason and love will light your path with smiles, and teach you to laugh at your former childish terror. You are already saved from what you dread, because that of which you are afraid is only a phantom, a ghost that will fade with the morning light.

So far as the story in the book of Acts is concerned, the interpretation of the gaoler's question seems to me to be this.— We are told that Paul and Silas were thrown into prison at Philippi, but while they were

still there an earthquake took place which shook the walls and loosened the bolts and chains that confined all the prisoners. There is no need to presume a miracle in this incident. In an Eastern country earthquakes are of more frequent occurrence than in our Western land; and the building used as a prison would be a much more flimsy structure than the substantial gaols of modern times. The gaoler in charge was naturally alarmed, and his first thought was that all the prisoners had escaped and he would be held accountable for the affair. In his fear of the consequences, he was about to commit suicide, when Paul called out to him that all was right, and he need not be afraid. "What must I do to be saved?" he asks — saved that is, from the anger and punishment of the magistrates. But Paul, who missed no opportunity of spreading the faith, took up his question in a different way, and answered: —"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and he and Silas proceeded to explain their gospel to him. So that it was no dread of Hell or the wrath of God that prompted the question originally, but a gaoler's fear of losing his situation, or even his head, in case any of the prisoners were missing in the morning.

The answer which Paul gave to the frightened gaoler has been perverted in later times in a way that would be ridiculous, if it were not so dangerous. The common cry of conventional Christianity is — "Believe, *only* believe, and you will be saved." Now, though I think Paul's words were quite true if understood properly, I am sure they are foolish and untrue in the way they are commonly interpreted. Yet thousands of preachers, and infinitely more

hearers, will tell you that the only requisite for salvation is a simple "belief in the Lord Jesus Christ." Works are but filthy rags: righteousness is a delusive show, under which the devil is often hidden; and all you have to do to be sure of eternal life is only to believe.

Common sense rebels against such notions as these, and teaches us much better than some of these modern apostles. And outraged conscience stands as a perpetual protest against any so-called religion that professes to dispense with holy works and virtuous life.

When I am told that Christ has borne my sins and their consequences for me, and I have only to believe this in order to be saved, my reply is simply — I do not and cannot believe it: indeed I devoutly trust I never shall believe it. I want no scapegoat to bear my weight of sin; much less do I want my divinest brother to bear it, even if he could, which I deny. It is idle to say that we can shift our responsibilities on to the shoulders of others: we *cannot* and *ought not*. God holds each individual responsible for the sins he commits. No man can escape the consequences of his own acts, and God does not intend that he should. Conscience is a living witness to the untruth. And I say further, that he who seeks to take the responsibility of his sins from his own shoulders, in order to lay it on his brother, is a *coward* — nothing less. Jesus had his own life to answer for: you have yours, and I have mine.

But there is a sense, as I have already hinted, in which Paul's answer was perfectly correct, and it was in that sense that he and the rest of the early disciples used the words "belief in Jesus Christ." In the infancy of Christianity, to be a believer in Jesus

Christ meant something more. Any one who became his disciple not only *believed* in his gospel but tried to *live* it. It was no time for half-hearted discipleship. To be a disciple in those early days meant more than a name. It required courage to stand by this new prophet and own oneself to be a follower of his, and no one would care to bear the sacrifice and the contumely such a position involved unless he was in earnest about it. He not only believed, but endeavored to act up to his belief: he not only professed, but tried to practice, the gospel. Here we have the key to Paul's meaning when he urged the gaoler, as he did in so many other cases, to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." He did not mean that he was simply to believe that such a person had existed, or even to believe that what he taught was true. The "belief" that Paul recommended was more than this: it was such "belief" as he himself had, a *faith* that *worked* in him and brought forth the fruit of righteousness. Such a faith did he recommend to others: not a dead, unreal faith, not a lifeless belief, not an idle profession, but a faith that showed its life in the works that resulted from it, a belief that quickened the whole nature and made it sweeter and holier, a profession that was only the outward appearance of a glorious inner reality.

Such a belief in Jesus Christ as this implied that a man saw the force and beauty of the new gospel proclaimed to men; that he recognized in God a Being of infinite tenderness and boundless love, who is full of pity and pardon, and is ever working for the amelioration of humanity; that he felt the claim of the spirit of God upon him in the promptings and forbiddings of conscience and in the call for a higher

and holier life; that he looked into the faces of the toiling, sinning, and suffering humanity about him, and saw in each a son of God and a brother to himself, who claimed a brother's love and help, and had a right to his sympathy, forbearance, and affection; that he determined to go through life in faithful obedience to the two noble principles of Love to God and Love to Man, and, by so doing, win his way to a diviner life and the approval of God. All this was involved in such a belief as that which Paul urged; so that, as I said before, his answer to the question "What must I do to be saved?" if properly understood, is the true one.

But as time rolls on the use of language changes: old expressions lose their original meaning and become superseded. In this twentieth century after Jesus Christ lived and died, the old answer to the question "What must I do to be saved?" is apt to be misleading and even harmful. It is too late in the day now to answer a thoughtful self-reliant man in the old words "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Times and circumstances are altered, and though our answer will probably *mean* the same thing as Paul intended, it must be expressed in very different terms to suit the needs and tendencies of the age.

Suppose then that the question is put to me to-day; what will be my answer? First, I must know what Salvation means. If my questioner means that a great proportion of the human race is on the highroad to an Eternal Hell, and he wants to be told how to escape such a fate, I have no answer except that I do not believe in his theology at all, and if he will not be guided by a rational faith, he had better go

to some spiritual adviser who still teaches the old doctrines in the old way. Surely that must be a strange idea of God which makes him into the creator of an Endless Hell. Is this the God whom Jesus spoke of as "my Father and your Father, my God and your God?" Is this the "Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"? Is this "the Lord, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy"? Is this "our Father in heaven" who forgives us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us? Is this the Father of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan? Why, what a travesty upon God we make when our hearts tremble at the thought of his eternal wrath! Souls cannot burn, and if they could, a good God would not desire to burn them. The Father who loves his children would not doom them to everlasting punishment, more especially as he has tolerated the blighting conditions which have in so many sad cases destroyed the possibility of noble character.

> Were it not thus, O King of my salvation,
> Many would curse to thee, and I for one,
> Fling thee thy bliss and snatch at thy damnation;
> Scorn and abhor the shining of the sun;
> Ring with a reckless shivering of laughter
> Wrath at the woe which thou hast seen so long;
> Question if any recompense hereafter,
> Waits to atone the intolerable wrong.

If, however, the inquirer comes to me, and tells me he has sinned and fallen short of his duty to God and to man; if he thinks not so much about the future punishment as about his present shame; if the salvation he is in search of is not salvation from *Hell,*

but from *Sin;* if he seeks to be saved, not from the effects of his sin but from sin itself and the sinning spirit (and this is the only true salvation), then I can answer him gladly and with ease.

First, I ask him to be a brave man, and no coward. If a great work is to be done, we stand little chance of doing it well when we begin with shaking knees and a sinking heart. The soul must learn to be brave, courageous in all contingencies, gaining its courage through a perfect trust in the love of God which passeth knowledge. These wretched dogmas of the man-made creeds hide from us the true light and keep us back from giving our own nature fair play. We are like children frightened of the dark. We are haunted by ghosts and nightmares which a degrading theology conjures up for our heated brain. "More light!" is our cry, and the creeds rise like a thick curtain to hide God's sweet and comforting truth from us. All the manhood is stamped out of religion by this fear of ghosts that only exist in the imagination, and are laughed at by the healthy, vigorous mind which will not be emasculated. We want the courage to trust our own nature, to stand alone if need be in an unpopular conviction, and to fear no foe while we feel that truth is on our side. The night is the time for fear; ignorance is the cause of fear; when the morning comes, and we can look our enemy straight in the face, our fears will vanish. God hasten the coming of the morning that shall chase away the idle fears of men and their lack of faith in his boundless love!

In the next place, I bid my friend be ready to take the consequences of his own decisions and actions upon his own head. I warn him against trust-

ing the specious promises and illusions about casting his sins on Christ or on any one except himself. I remind him of the apostolic teaching to the Philippians, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Let him grasp the solid truth that it was he and no other that sinned, and as his conscience accuses him of that sin, so he and no other (not even Christ) must take the penalty for it, and work his own way towards the salvation he seeks. It is unjust that any substitute should be allowed to stand in our place and take the whipping that we alone have deserved. If it comes to a cry of justice being satisfied, we ask of God no more than that "justice tempered with mercy" to which he prompts us in our souls. We will not come to him with whining begging petitions, trying to escape the unpleasant consequences of our wilful misdeeds and cast them upon an innocent person. Nay, if our souls realize their own dignity, we shall *ask* him to punish us for our sins, and we can trust him not to make the punishment cruel and vindictive. We feel that, if we sin, we ought to suffer. Words cannot express the horror of a manly spirit at that most unmanly and unnatural doctrine which teaches that Jesus — the purest soul the world has ever known — is to bear the burden of our sins and pay the penalty that we may go free. God takes care that sin and holiness shall carry with them their own rewards. The consequences are wrapped up in the choice we make. Do what we may, we cannot escape these consequences, and we have no right to try.

Then I point out to him that he has already taken the first step towards the goal he is seeking by owning his sin, by confessing that he knew he ought to have

lived more nobly and purely than he has done, by acknowledging that he has heard but neglected the divine call to a better and more virtuous life. This is the initial step towards salvation. If a man cries "What must I do to be saved?" the first thing for him to do is to stop wringing his hands and giving way to despair, and to confess humbly and earnestly that he has sinned before God.

Next, I should ask him to think seriously what an awful thing sin is, so that, if possible, now that he has owned his sin, he may see its hideousness and deformity, and, from very disgust at the old ways, be induced to enter upon a new path of righteousness. I should remind him that all of us come to earth we know not how, and go we know not whither. I would ask him to consider *why* we are here at all; whether our existence is meant to be an aimless one after all, a few years of tossing life and then eternal silence; or whether it does not seem infinitely truer that he who formed us knew what he was doing, and had a great purpose before him; that, in fact, we have life at all in order that it may be used for the noblest purposes and directed to the highest ends. I would beg him to think of the meaning of Conscience, that mysterious counsellor, whose voice we cannot shut out, and whose demands are often at variance with our own wishes; to hear in its claims the tones of Almighty God who chooses this method of communicating his constant will to his inconstant children. To disobey the eternal God, to act in direct contempt of the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity, to bid defiance against the infinite God to whom we owe our life and all that we have, is indeed a daring and terrible thing. And then,

by way of contrast, I would point out to him how excellent is the way of righteousness, how beautiful is simple obedience to the will of God, how delightful it is to know that one is trying to do the right, and to live a life of purity and progress. This perception of the ugliness of sin and the beauty of holiness is a long step in the way of salvation.

Then, with the dawning of a better disposition, I would urge him to use the glorious privilege of Free-will which God has given him, banish for ever by a firm resolve the dark and sinning past, and with brave determination enter upon the path of righteousness and progress that leads to light and everlasting life. It will not do simply to confess our sin and own its ugliness: we must assert our manliness and womanliness, turn our back upon sin and all its associations, and, at whatever sacrifice, resolve to be braver and truer — make up our minds that, no matter who fails, *we* will prove worthy of our God — and so, setting aside every temptation and fighting every darling sin, we must win our way to more faithful service and a higher life. Thank God for human will which enables us to control ourselves, and for its freedom which dignifies our nature by making us responsible for its condition. Show a man his capabilities, and he will know how far to trust himself. Prove to him that his strength is great enough to master every temptation, and he knows at once that he can reign as king over sin. To those, then, who ask me, "What must I do to be saved?" I reply in the words of James Thomson:

> Resolve, resolve! and to be *men* aspire;
> Exert that noblest privilege alone
> Here to mankind indulged; control desire;

> Let God-like reason, from her sovereign throne,
> Speak the commanding word '*I will*,' and it is done.

This will of ours is a glorious privilege. True, it gives an opening for sin, but otherwise there would be no such thing as holiness. God leaves us to use our will and shape our own life. He does not create a full-blown flower, but tends the seed and nurtures the young plant, till at last it bursts forth into glorious bloom. He does not create man in a state of perfection, but allows him to grow by a process of natural evolution, until at last he arrives at the full stature of human dignity. There is no hope of any man's salvation from sin unless he rouses himself in determination against it. No man will be worth much if fate is his phantom. But make him understand how indomitable Will has conquered nature and overcome moral difficulties: convince him that no one is so hopelessly degraded as to have lost all force of will; and you do for him the greatest possible service: you teach him to stand upon his feet and be a man.

When once he has turned in the right direction, the man in earnest must be taught to banish selfishness from his plan. I would urge him to remember that no man can live for himself alone. He belongs not to himself, but to God and to Humanity. Let him put his own individuality as far as possible in the background, and find without delay some useful work to do for his brethren. Was it not Wilberforce who, when asked whether he did not stop sometimes to think about his own salvation, answered that he was so busy working for the salvation of others that he had not time to stop and think about his own?

Self-sacrifice and not self-seeking is the divine lesson for man. Two great world-religions at least are established upon it,—Christianity and Buddhism. Perhaps the finest word ever spoken on this subject was that attributed to Gautama Buddha: "Never will I seek or receive private individual salvation, never enter into final peace alone; but forever and everywhere will I live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout all worlds. Until all are delivered, never will I leave the sphere of sin, sorrow, and struggle."

Until we learn to forget ourselves, and cease to make salvation into a prize for the obtaining of which we have to jostle and push one another aside, we are still very far from the Kingdom of Heaven. The more we concentrate our attention upon ourselves the more faithless do we become to the great divine claims upon our life, and the less worthy, therefore, we are for participating in a higher life. Ask yourself — not, What must I do to be saved? but — What must I do to save? What can I do to make my life of service to the world? Those who best deserve salvation think least about it, but live the best they can. Salvation, like happiness, ought not to be made an aim in itself. By directly seeking these ends, we are apt to miss them; but by simply going on our ordinary way and doing the right thing at the right time in the right way, they come to us of themselves.

But I would not ask my questioner to rely altogether on his own efforts and his own will. It is true no progress can be effected unless a man takes the initiative for himself, and makes up his mind to effect a moral improvement in his own nature; but his strength is sometimes little better than weakness,

and without divine assistance he may work and fail. I do not here enter into the problem as to what this assistance really is: how God gives strength to our souls; whether it is some special gift sent in answer to our prayer, or whether the very act of prayer itself fills us with a deeper sense of responsibility and, by drawing our souls to God, reacts upon ourselves and makes us stronger. But this I do know,— that true and earnest prayer brings with it a blessing and an inspiration, come whence it may, that make the way of life less rough and lighten the tasks we have placed before us. And so to him who has made noble resolves for the future, and is making a new and higher departure in his life, I have this further advice to give — Go down on your knees often, and pray for new strength to keep you right. When you are under temptation, even if it be in public gaze and in the open day, let your silent prayer go up to the Father of spirits, and he will answer it, though your head and knees were not bowed nor your eyes closed. And when you have fought and conquered your sin, go to him with a thankful heart for having brought you thus far, and pray for grace to persevere. Often lay bare your soul before our Almighty Father in some such mood as this:

> Father, to us thy children humbly kneeling,
> Conscious of weakness, ignorance, sin, and shame,
> Give such a force of holy thought and feeling,
> That we may live to glorify thy name;
> That we may conquer base desire and passion;
> That we may rise from selfish thought and will,
> O'ercome the world's allurement, threat and fashion,
> Walk humbly, gently, leaning on thee still.

And then, when you have recognized and owned

your sin, seen its baseness and the beauty of holiness, resolved henceforth to stand erect amongst your fellow men and be a living example of love to God and Man, prayed for and obtained the grace of God and the new inspiration that accompanies it, you can go boldly and resolutely through the world, fighting your temptations and conquering your sins, earning the affection of your brethren and the loving approbation of the heavenly Father, and thereby achieving the salvation you desire. No longer need you hesitate about what you must do to be saved, no longer waste your time in idle words and despairing questions, but bravely gird yourself for the spiritual battle of life, and win eternal salvation by your devotion to the cause of Truth and Right and Love and God.

Man, work out your own salvation!
  Live, and not repeat, your creed;
God, who lends you priceless talents,
  Gives you all the help you need.

Faith is idle, creed is barren,
  If the heart be slow to love;
But a life of faithful service
  Wins the smile of God above.

Heaven is his whose way is upright,
  Doing all the good he can,
Pure in heart and self-denying,
  Loving God and fellow man.

This, the ever-blessed message,
  Jesus ceased not to impart.
And to-day his word is ringing:—
  Blessed are the pure in heart.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT **MAINTAINS** (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT **PUBLISHES** (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

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[No. 248]

WHAT UNITARIANISM REALLY IS

Library of the
PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

BY

REV. THOMAS R. SLICER

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church

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(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

WHAT UNITARIANISM REALLY IS

I

THE SIMPLEST EXPRESSION OF CHRISTIANITY

"I fear lest by any means your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is toward Christ," II. Cor. xi. 3.

One is so oppressed by the things he must omit in such a summary as is here contemplated, that it is difficult to adjust oneself to the main outlines of a subject, at once so simple and so fraught with historic importance. The earliest effort of Unitarianism during the later centuries was the protest made in Transylvania and Hungary more than three hundred years ago against the dominant Calvinism on the one side and Roman Catholicism on the other. I commend you to the reading of that history which has no immediate reference to our subject here and now, but more than three hundred years ago there were martyrs in Transylvania to this faith in which we stand; Franz David died in prison because he would not deny "the simplicity and purity that is toward Christ"; whole villages went over in a single day to what they thought a truer and simpler interpretation of the Christian religion. I have only to remind you that more than a hundred years ago Joseph Priestley, because he was a scientific adventurer and discoverer, was practically driven out of England for declaring that all the truth of God, whether in physical science or in mental process or in scriptural revelation or in personal experience,

had one source and moved to one end; his laboratory was broken into and his instruments destroyed; he fled from England and gathered perhaps the earliest group of worshipping Unitarians in this country, on the banks of the Susquehanna. So it went on, until many of the churches in New England had imperceptibly changed their theological outlook. This anticipates the time of Channing and, the so-called Unitarian movement, and was an effort of individual souls leading the people in worship. These men, New England pastors for the most part so far as our own country is concerned, found themselves hindered in the development of the highest religious life by the accumulations of theological perplexities that overlaid the simplicity of the gospel. It could be shown how these modern statements of Christian theology arose. We should still quote James Martineau, who till ninety-five years of age was the prophet of our faith in England, and who said: "To witness the growth of a doctrine is to perceive the course of its dissolution;" and when we were through with the survey of these doctrines of modern Christianity, exclusive of the liberal churches, you would simply see the joints where they were connected, where any sharp intelligence might enter its point of criticism and penetrate to the very life of it. For instance: Maryland was the first of the colonies to proclaim the absolute tolerance of religion; but under that proclamation it was still cause of death that one should deny the Trinity. "At Antioch were men first called Christians," and we happen to know what was the doxology at Antioch, because one of the writers of the early church, Theophilus, preserved the statement that it was:

"Glory be to the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit;" which is not a Trinitarian formula as it is understood to-day, or as it was understood in Maryland at the time of which we speak as tolerant. So that "toleration" is not what we seek. *Spiritual sympathy* is that for which we stand, and in that we follow the Christian lead of the Second Century at Antioch. The first movement in Palestine which bore the name of Jesus was an effort to include the Greeks in the Jewish church. Jesus was a Jew in body, mind and motive, but he knew what St. Ambrose later expressed that "religions are many, but Religion is One." One of these expressions of religion is the Christian faith; the man who says everybody must be Christian is not an instructed historian; there were millions of people who died in the sanctity of some faith before Jesus came into the world, but now that he has come it behooves those, *who find his teaching good*, to follow his lead, and we hold that OUR FAITH is the simplest expression of that religion; not that it alone is Religion. There is not a Sect so small, based upon the narrowest ground, with the fewest members to support it, but was based in the first instance on some vital spiritual truth and was meant to lead men to a higher life. And the man who cannot admit that — well, he does not walk with him of Nazareth who when they asked him: "Shall we call fire down from heaven and consume them because they follow not with us?" answered, "The son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

SPIRITUAL SYMPATHY! For that reason when twenty years ago there came to us an invitation to go into Japan to explain to the people what is liberal

Christianity, the man who went with that message refused to be called "a missionary," as though he had brought a new discovery to people in darkness. We called him, when he sailed, "the minister extraordinary from the kingdom of Heaven to the empire of Japan;" and it was extraordinary in the way of missions that there should be a sympathetic interchange between the Christian religion and the old faiths of Japan. We went to enquire in what particulars we thought alike, to what ends we moved alike, for what spiritual growth we stood alike, and how Buddhism and the Shinto faith, which is now simply the court ritual of Japan, and the ethics of Confucianism, how all these were related to the faith that is in Jesus Christ. And we announced — and this is fundamental to our thinking — that when there should be native helpers enough to teach the Japanese we would withdraw from the country; and five years ago all the Americans withdrew, and left forty native helpers to carry on the work. For Japanese Christianity cannot possibly be the same as the Christianity of America: it will take the Japanese form, the Asiatic form, be inspired by the Asiatic spirit, and the most we can do is what we are trying to do in the charters of our great cities, to give a body of organic law; so in Religion to give the simple lines of the teaching of Jesus, to indicate the simple ends of life at its best, and then leave them to fill in the picture according to the Japanese thought. Now that is fundamental to our understanding of the simplicity of the Christian religion. People unite, like mountains, at the roots of thought, and separate at the peaks. They are grounded alike in a common basis; they separate and are diverse

for *the points of view.* We whisper together where the mountains meet at the roots, but we shout across from peak to peak. Our differences are not fundamental in religion; they are the differing expression of that fundamental thought. Therefore we say: "Unitarianism is the simplest expression of the Christian religion."

Let us enquire very briefly why this is so. Christianity in its beginning was AN ENTHUSIASM FOR A PERSON, a person who was to his followers a revelation of God to men; what has been laid upon that earliest feeling for Christ is purely extraneous, more or less modern, and easily removed, but in the last analysis Jesus is to every believer in Christianity, every follower of the man of Nazareth, the great exemplar, the expression of *what God is in terms of human life,* just as a great redwood tree in California is the expression of what God is in terms of redwood tree, just as an American Beauty rose is the expression of what God is in terms of roses; the American Beauty is not the only rose that grows, and the redwood tree is not the only pine tree that springs its arches of green over the landscape. So Jesus is the expression to us of the life of God *in terms of human life.* When that is admitted some one says, "But how was he constituted?" How, we reply, are you constituted? The theologian asks, "Had he two natures in one person?" If humanity has two natures in one person, he had, we reply; but by so much as we make him other than the man of to-day in his nature and possibilities, by just so much he ceases to be the Saviour of men. Now there are hundreds of thousands of people to-day who believe he was a man as we are, human as we

are, a revealer of God as we are meant to be, who are not Unitarians by profession, because they have no enthusiasm for him as a person; it is merely a speculative idea or consideration with them; Unitarianism is an enthusiasm for him because he is the kind of man we would be, who did work for the world which we seek to do, who bore the relation to God that we seek to bear; and we refuse to entertain curious questions about his nature, and would know only how far the will of God is to be seen in him. Those other questions are interesting, no doubt; they make a body of theology, but we fall back on the splendid statement of one of our men that "theology is the rhetoric of religion," and we know that when one is deeply in earnest he is least rhetorical. Language is the natural expression of feeling, not its ornamental concealment.

This leads to another fundamental distinction between ourselves and the people with whom we are in spiritual sympathy, but who do not speak religious language as we do. All theological statement we believe has only the relation to religion that a definition has to the thing defined, the same relation that a recipe has to the food we eat. We do not live upon the recipe, but upon the food; we are not cured by the doctor's prescription; the recipe is written down only that one may communicate the method of the preparation to another, who does not know how. The physician has been schooled to prepare medicinal elements of the things supposed to cure the diseases of the world; but it is only the Indian medicine-man who tells his patient to swallow the prescription. The prescription of the Indian medicine-man is rolled into a pellet and the sick man

swallows it; that is not done by the modern physician in curing disease; nor by the Unitarian believer in Jesus in promoting religion.

What is the relation then between doctrine and life? Doctrine is only the effort of one man who believes in a reality to tell another man what he believes; the reality phrases itself in terms of the reason; no man can convey to another the terms of the spiritual life; it is not thought out, but felt; for faith is not faith in a proposition, but is the conviction concerning a reality of the inner life; so when we get together and try to compare views, when for a moment we forget that all spiritual experiences grow from the seed and are not transplanted from one nature to another, then we try to state in terms of reason how God and Christ seem to us, how the Bible appeals to us, and so on through the round of theological definition. But you may believe that a thing *is* without knowing *how it is;* that is very simple and elementary; I know that a mountain is when I see it cut the horizon with its bulk, but I do not know what it is; I may be too far away to know whether the growth on it is soft wood or hard, pine and spruce or maple and beech; I cannot tell perhaps any of those things, but I know it is a mountain because it rises to intersect the view of the heavens; it cuts the line of the horizon. I do not know what it is in its mineral resources, but I know that it is a mountain. And so I may know the Scripture is inspired, because *it inspires me* as I read it. I do not need to know whether it was inspired in the man who wrote it; the proof of inspiration is not in the writer, but in the reader. It is a holy writing if it inspires holiness; I do not need

to be a critical scholar to know that. So with regard to Jesus of Nazareth, I know that he is *the leader of men because he leads.* I would not follow him if he did not lead. Why should a man go through life dragging round dead bodies of divinity after him? They are called "bodies of divinity," because they are not the spirit of divinity; "it is the letter that killeth, the spirit that giveth life." So our devotion to Jesus of Nazareth as a leader is because he leads, not because we must follow. I can conceive of a man not believing at all in Jesus, and out of the depths of his own goodness and the nurture of the divine Spirit, leading a life so nearly like that of Jesus that he is surprised to find that nineteen hundred years ago that life was lived in a little province of Syria. It is the soul that makes the Bible, not the Bible the soul, and it is the heart that recognizes Jesus of Nazareth. And so with all the other subjects of our theological differences with our friends. I go into a Catholic cathedral and kneel to pray; I am not disturbed by the images, I am not enlightened by the images, I am not distracted by their presence from the higher presence of which they were originally meant to be the symbols; the motherhood of the world is greater than the Virgin and her Child in the symbolism of the church; and prayer used *before* this image to lift the soul, after a while became prayer *to* the image as never was the intention; the symbolism has hardened into fact; and in the same way doctrine hardens into necessity, and we are told that unless we believe this or that definition we cannot know the reality, but I say that in the simplicity of religion we know *that a thing is without knowing what it is,* and the communion

of the soul with God is direct and immediate and instant, as it was in Jesus, the Christ.

And that brings us to a suggestion as to this "simplicity"—we believe as the New Testament says, that we stand related to God, as Jesus of Nazareth stood related to God. We are in the same way Sons of God as he was Son of God, and because we are Sons of Man, as he was Son of Man. Our humanity finds its divinity in God! We are sometimes too dull to realize that, or too indolent to adventure it. The teaching of the New Testament is in this particular perfectly plain; He is "the way" to the Father, "the life" from the Father of all things; that "way," that "life" are ours. Let me quote two or three Scriptures. Says Paul in one of his letters: "We then are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, *we pray you in Christ's stead,* be ye reconciled to God." There is the substitution of the new messenger for the message delivered by Jesus of Nazareth. The teaching of Jesus was always *from the ground up.* "What man of you that is a father, if his son ask bread, will give him a stone, or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then being evil (immature) know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven (perfection) give good things to them that ask Him?" It is the substitution of the human father for the living God; and we refuse to believe that any intermediary is necessary between God and man. If the story of the Prodigal Son means anything it is the story of how God receives his erring children; there was no one admitted between the father's love and the boy's aching heart; the elder brother stood

aside and protested; he was out of the scene because he was out of humor with the scene; he represents the unloving, who needs explanation of love's immediateness. Between the father and the son there was nothing; no barrier — no explanation; there is nothing between love and love. So we have no interest, because it is not of the teaching of Jesus, in the scheme of artificial interference, of sacrificial atonement, of intercession by priests or saints or angels or by Christ, because we cannot find it either in human nature or in that fine product of human nature, "the good news" of God in Jesus Christ.

Now it is a curious thing to note that a great body of Christian thought was built up around and out of Milton's "Paradise Lost." Milton himself was an Arian, a half developed Unitarian; he was going round through the lines of theology with half the shell still on his back, not quite hatched; but in the "Paradise Lost" (which we do not think *Lost*, but yet to come) there is laid down a system of theology which the Christian churches, following the declining influence of the Church of Rome in England, dating from the time of the Commonwealth, in the main have adopted. As a result of that, Protestants fell in love, not with God, but with Milton's Satan. That is one of the most interesting things in literature and theology. Every literary critic will tell you that Satan is the finest personality in the poem; he is more dignified in being cast out of Heaven than the archangels that cast him out. As a result the Protestant churches for the most part, and the Catholic church, as well, to a slighter extent, have built up around this splendid Satan a well-appointed Hell. We have no interest

in this! Charles Carroll Everett made the statement that "we believe in human nature, not ruined, but incomplete." So in 1859, when Professor Wallace and Charles Darwin coincidently, one in the Southern Archipelago and the other in England, discovered the origin of species and proclaimed the evolutionary hypothesis, as illustrated by this discovery, every church was in arms against it excepting the believers of our way of thinking. If human nature grew from less to more and does not date from a lost Eden, it behooved those who believed in the Fall of Man to be concerned as to the issue of their doctrine; but the singular thing about the Unitarian faith is that it stands ready to accept every real discovery. There was scarcely a man among us who did not at once follow this line after mature consideration, and the result is that we quote from these great men of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, as easily as from the ancient prophets of the ancient scriptures, believing them all to be prophets of the living God; and where they have anything to say that is true it is our privilege to repeat it. We have not been overlaid and encumbered by considerations of mere speculative character, which have interfered with any truth that upon its announcement has been sufficiently proved for our acceptance; "where the spirit is there is liberty," where "the letter" is there is a stereotype-plate; and the process of breaking up by which that stereotype-plate becomes movable type, for resetting and adjustment, is tedious and costly.

Now some one says, "You say that you stand for the teaching of Jesus?" Yes. Our churches some fifteen years ago in the National Conference, in

order to quiet a criticism which charged that we were not Christian, and to open the way for those persons who desired "the simplicity that is toward Christ," adopted as the "Preamble" of the Conference's constitution these words:

"We accept the religion of Jesus, holding with him that essential religion consists in love to God and love to man."

That Preamble is accepted by all our churches; and you have only to prove to us that the religion of Jesus is other than "love to God and love to man" to impair in any way our fidelity to the simple teaching of Christ.

Why is it that in all the churches, in all the religious periodicals, in all the magazines nearly, they are discussing the loss of power by the church; why is it that these people who have got through with the churches do not become members of our church? The reason is simple. First, they do not know what we stand for, they do not know that we stand for the simple religion of Jesus of Nazareth; and next, if they do know it, many of them have no enthusiasm for living the life of Christ; simply having a quarrel with "orthodox theology," so called, does not constitute any one Unitarian. *Spiritual sympathy* is the keynote of our whole communion; going back to "the simplicity that is in Christ" is an essential of our thought. If we do not accept all in the gospels, we are still in line with the composite portrait that the gospels make of that splendid personality; for that is the most you can do with a matter nineteen hundred years away. To that we bring our best intelligence and dedicate our highest enthusiasm for imitation and example, and for that we claim

Jesus of Nazareth in our thinking the leader of our faith. If I could gather in some great place an assembly of those who no longer believe in religion as it was taught them at the beginning of their lives, if I could gather together all the men and women who are out of sympathy with the churches, I think I could state to them a plan of life and a faith in Christ, and a relation to God that would leave almost all their difficulties like the leaves that have fallen from the trees to make way for the bud that is to come with the spring; for nearly all these things are unessential to our life and have nothing to do with our religious integrity. If they could but once hear and realize the simplicity that is toward Christ I think we should have a great revival of liberal religion which would strengthen the loins of the doubters, clear the thinking of the community, and make men abate their eagerness for mere material well-being, and induce them to feel that the simple life of the Man of Nazareth is worth while, worth living again here and now.

II

THE FIVE CARDINAL POINTS OF THE UNITARIAN FAITH

"That we be no longer children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by sleight of men, in craftiness after the wiles of error, but speaking the truth in love may grow up in all things into him which is the head, even Christ," Ephesians iv. 14.

In May of 1819, Dr. Channing preached in Baltimore at the ordination of Gared Sparks, known both as a historian and as a Unitarian minister, a sermon in which he set the five points of Unitarianism over against the five points of Calvinism. More than this, James Freeman Clarke, for forty-eight years minister of the Church of the Disciples in Boston, being enquired of as to the essential elements of Unitarian faith, announced five propositions, differing from the earlier five points only as having their ground in personal religion, as those of Channing found their reason in an enlightened theology. These five points of Dr. Clarke's sublime faith are commonly believed among us, "both as reasonable and effectual,"

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Man Onward and Upward Forever.

Emerson said that "Nature seems to love the number five"—how much human nature really loved the five points of Calvinism has not yet appeared. The five points of Unitarianism then were set by Channing as both natural and humane against the five points of Calvinism. He opposed to the doctrine of the trinity in God the unity of God; against the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, by which he was God in one aspect and man in another and not completely either in each, he set the simple nature of Jesus and declared for his humanity; against the unloving and unlovable God as seen in the doctrine of predestination he set the moral perfection of God and declared that it was not incumbent on any human being to love an unlovely Being as the source of things; that it was impossible for God to be morally worse than man and yet be an object of adoration by man; against the atonement of Jesus he set the moral influence of Jesus, and declared him the leader of men because he was an example worthy and possible of imitation, and not because of a mystery impossible of explanation; instead of discussing the total depravity of man he discoursed on the essentially moral nature of man, his perfectibility — doctrine that is now accepted by the scientific mind, even when least religious; man is destined to an endless progression toward perfection.

Let us now consider the first two points of the later five essentials of faith, which are accredited to James Freeman Clarke as essential Unitarianism. And will you mark that I have called these five cardinal points not Unitarian *belief,* but of Unitarian *faith;* because, between faith and belief is all

the difference between a motive power and an opinion. Belief, doctrine, is teaching; dogma is thinking, as the roots of the words imply. We think, that we may be instructed, so that we may hold a rational faith; but we do not oppose the thinking of any individual against the spiritual necessities of another man. So that the three signal affirmations of Channing were the dignity of human nature, the supremacy of the reason as the spiritual organ of knowledge and religious liberty as distinguished from sectarian exclusiveness. These are all based to some degree in the first two statements, the first two points of James Freeman Clarke, "the Fatherhood of God" and "the Brotherhood of Man."

I am asked if the Fatherhood of God was never believed before the time of Christ? I answer that in every religion in some aspect the source of things is considered and in most of them there is some aspect of fatherhood — the origins of CREATION; if it were only the power of creation, the source of being, that was to be considered I should commend to you in preference to almost any other expression of it that great Hymn to Zeus by the Greek Kleanthes, which has perhaps no equal in any language in beauty and grandeur. But the Fatherhood of God, in the mind of Jesus and in the minds of those who really apprehend its deeper meanings, is not limited by the idea of creation, though the "Sense of Cause" is fundamental to the human mind. Should you take five minutes now of perfect silence in which you think of the uncaused, you would move back and back in your thinking from point to point, till you would reach what you would call God — the Ultimate Source of

Being; and then when you went home your little child might ask you "Who made God?" because the sense of the uncaused is impossible to the human mind; so long as reason is logical and cause and effect are related; the idea of cause is as much fundamental to our thinking as the idea of space and time; we can only think of things in space relation and time succession. So we do not discover any great fundamental, inspiring truth in the Fatherhood of God if it means simply the creative energy in which all things are and have come; it is in a deeper sense that we use the word, in a sense the Greek only in his best moments realized, and which the Roman scarcely realized at all, which appears here and there in divergence from the common thought of the Old Testament, in its highest poetry as in the 139th Psalm — the Hymn of Omnipresence. In Jesus the cardinal doctrine of his teaching was that God was "a father infinitely fatherly"; not simply infinitely productive and creative. The whole teaching of Jesus is based on the conception that man is *the child* of God and has rights in God by virtue of his relationship, rights which may not be denied him; that he is divinely derived out of the very essence of love, that he has come into being not simply rationally but bearing the stamp of the divine affection upon him. For that reason the teaching of Jesus is universally optimistic; given a being, such as he conceived God to be, and the contribution of every great religious believer, of every man of faith, to the world is that he does not give a new God, but makes it possible to believe in a God better than before. So that the saying of the late Robert Ingersoll is not difficult to accept nor inapt to quote,

that "An honest God is the noblest work of man." The being whom a great prophet, whether of Nazareth or of any other country, or time, proclaims shall be only as great, as beautiful, as supremely adorable, as the nature of that prophet can conceive. He may be actually a million times more than this conception; but all you, or I, can derive from any man's clear vision and spiritual insight is that He shall be the Being, the highest and best that we can conceive. Do you then say: He has no existence otherwise than in the mind of the worshipper? That is too primary as an objection, too elementary as an argument, to require discussion. I cannot conceive of that which shall become motive to my life if it does not exist; I can only recognize that which exists and recommend it to my own spiritual preference as worthy to be commended. When men were anxious Jesus told them to look on the grass of the field and the birds of the air; to him and to us, in spite of catastrophe and the domain of ill and the misadventure of life, there is an infinite care which may be as much seen in that which comes to its tragedy as that which comes to its beatitude. We cannot measure the care nor discriminate among its evidences; we are not wise enough to know why things are as they are, but the optimism of Jesus is the moving faith of every believing soul; things are good, they are destined to be better. If you ask me whether this is the best possible world, I say frankly that I do not know, but it is for me the best possible world up to date, and to-morrow is another day; possibly some revolution may show the possibility of a better world; but if we are faithful to the possible good for to-day we shall be ready to move on to the

next class in God's school. So the "*Fatherhood of God*" is essential to our faith, and so it is impossible to believe meanly of God; it is useless for any man, however learned or clever, to proclaim a Being as source of the life of the world and yet load him up with characteristics that would be despicable in a man; and then say to us that *because this is God* we cannot understand how He can be so notoriously vile and at the same time unquestionably loving. It is an insult to intelligence and cannot be entertained with any sort of simplicity of mind; for fundamental to all our thinking is the conviction that *what it is essential for any man to know, it must be easy for any man to understand!* He may not understand all it is, but the thing he understands last will be part and parcel of the thing he apprehended first, and the process shall be as logical as the succession of the seasons. The brown earth of the spring gives no promise of the summer's opulence, but the possibility is there and the certainty, to the man who is wise. What is essential for me to know must be easy for me to understand!

So as to the speculations of men concerning God as to whether He is absolute — and I might run through a number of these difficulties — all this is not important. Unitarians are called very shallow theologians; we are glad to have earned that distinction; a "deep theologian" is not of much use to the average man. In the period of controversy in which Channing's sermon was preached for twenty years there was a raging controversy between Trinitarianism and Unitarianism, but it does not interest us now. When a man asks me if the doctrine of the unity of God is *theologically true,* I say to him that

I do not know, but I do know that it is *philosophically necessary;* I cannot deal with the universe except in terms of the one; whether it may be explained in tritheism, or trimodalism, whether the Hegelian doctrine borrowed by the Broad Church, or the older Sabellian view borrowed by Bushnell, be true or not, I cannot say; but however it be, it must be dealt with finally in terms of the One. All these controversies had their day; and then we came to the sterile belt of materialism in our Wanderings in Theology. We remember the days of that desert through which we passed twenty-five years ago, when it seemed to us unfailing, indomitable, irrevocable, inexorable Law had everything in its grasp. We discovered one illumined day that law was nothing in itself but the expression of mind and the record of habit; and that there must be behind the Law and its inexorable processes a Will which it behooves us to obey and a Love which compels us to adore; and the Fatherhood of God returned in all its potency as the motive power of religion. Unitarianism rediscovered the Fatherhood of God. So when it is said of us that we have no theology, while it is not true, we are content simply to answer that Unitarianism is not "a body of doctrine, but a manner of living and a way of looking at things," and we insist that a man shall examine a text of Scripture as he would examine a specimen in the laboratory. There is no way but frankness and sincerity in dealing with opinions in religion. There is a fundamental distinction between a dishonest *statement* and a dishonest *mind.* It is quite conceivable that a good man might under the stress of temptation be dishonest, but it is inconceivable that a man with a dishonest

mind should ever be a good man. So we say a method of thinking is essential to faith, a habit of viewing things in the white light of reason. "Reason is no match for superstition; one great emotion must be expelled by another." That is true, and the Fatherhood of God is the basis of *a profound emotion;* and not simply a law of supply or origin.

Now nearly related to the Fatherhood of God, and almost as difficult to prove at every point, is the companion faith in "the brotherhood of man." They are the two sides of a shield, or, better, the obverse and reverse, the intaglio and cameo made from the same substance of thought. No man can believe the Fatherhood of God really without believing in the brotherhood of man. For that reason we are profoundly interested in all social reform. The charity organization and the associated-charity scheme began in the soul of Joseph Tuckerman, one of our ministers in Boston; the movement for abolition of slavery, if not uniform in our Unitarian churches, had its best exponents and ablest upholders among our people or in the Society of Friends. It is inconceivable to a really instructed person of this faith that a man should be an employer of labor and unjust, that he should regard men, since they are his brothers, in any other light than that which Paul throws upon the situation when he sends to Philemon the runaway slave, Onesimus; that passage where we see that, though a slave, he may still be "a brother beloved." That explains why Jesus did not discuss economic questions directly, as separate and apart from morality. Theology has been called the rhetoric of religion, and I suppose economic science might be called the rhetoric of ethics; and as in

rhetoric often the content is lost and the meaning vacated, so in economics we have nice distinctions not based in nature or in fact, and economic science becomes sooner or later a balancing of expediencies or a waiting for opportunity. Jesus is said by some to have set forward no social reform and by others to have set forth nothing else but social reform. He spoke in a time when the Roman Empire was made up of thirty million freemen and ninety million slaves, tributaries to Roman power: and yet from first to last there is not a word in condemnation of slavery. I think some of our abolition leaders in 1838 did charge upon him a lack of interest in the abolition of slavery, and the whole South at the outbreak of the war claimed that the New Testament said nothing against slavery and therefore it could not be offensive to God, because it was upheld in the Old Testament, and we went to war on the proposition that it was "a divine institution," practised in the time of the Old Testament and not rebuked in the New Testament. The fact is that Jesus would no more think of specifying the abolition of slavery than a competent physician now would try to treat a constitutional defect by an extraneous application. He taught the doctrine of *human brotherhood* and taught it in terms that made it possible for the slave in the Roman household to be beloved in the house of his master whom he served, and for the master to be beloved by the slave who served him: and slavery existed only when love was not the great emancipator of both master and slave; the distinction of class must pass away in the absolute democracy of a great affection. Absolute democracy does not know class. And in

this land, claiming to be democratic, the elevation of class is not simply ridiculous but grotesque. Jesus taught such love from God the Father and brotherhood among men as should eventually, when economic conditions were reached by ethics, make the abolition of slavery an absolute necessity. He did not need to specify the details of behaviour, he needed only to inspire the motives of conduct, and when a man loves another human being well enough, he gives that human being absolute liberty and does not desire in any sense to own him. We were slow in coming to it; England was a little before us; Brazil outstepped us, and still the slave trade is carried on in the Free State of the Congo as a means of revenue to the Belgian crown. Why? Because the ideal of brotherhood has not yet been realized. And that is the difficulty that I apprehend in this whole discussion that is before us now, in which arguments are many, turning upon sociological conditions, and in which a million votes could be cast to uphold the socialistic position. Its main difficulty is not economic but moral. Now, with profound sympathy for much of the motive and meaning that inspires it, with the feeling that the economic conditions are largely wrong, that there must be some essential change in methods of administration, but most of all in regard to human brotherhood, the two difficulties are that it moves to encourage class-consciousness, which is only another form of sectarianism, which is always beneath contempt — and which is always a lack of human sympathy — and until men can love the wrongdoer as well as the man wronged, they have not arrived at brotherhood; until we love the man who has done

us wrong, or who has done wrong to another, more than we are indignant at the wrong suffered, we have not reached the level of brotherhood or the basis on which we can do the work of the world. It is easy to preach to the sinner, and so hard to love him in spite of his sin. To love the unlovely is of the very essence of Religion which believes in the Brotherhood of Man.

The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man; these are the fundamentals. How does it affect the church? We frequently hear tremendous arraignments both of the Christian churches and the synagogues. Much of the arraignment is true, but it is not an indictment of the church alone but an arraignment of civilization. We are given to the habit of requiring of the church what we do not require of society, whereas the church in any rational aspect of it, severed from traditions and superstitions, is simply a segment of society. What gives it its special function? Society. Society declares that it shall be exempted from taxation because it is a part of the social whole that is a special instrument of good; and it has a dedicated ministry, lifted out of the sharp competition of life to give itself wholly to the work of the ministry. How shall the church not recognize that it is part of the social whole; and that it must set the finest example in society of the democracy that has brotherhood for its object and inspiration? To say that it fails more than the social whole is simply to say that it has lived more than the rest below the level of its privileges. And it is true that Christianity as an organized institution, as an instrument for the propagation of opinion, for the teaching of dogma,

has fallen behind the other parts of the social whole; and there is before us the dreadful indictment that all the defectives and delinquents who to-day are in prison, in the almshouses, in any penal servitude, with rare exception, have all been in the last thousand years in themselves or their ancestry, members of the Christian church, part of the Christian whole. That is a desperate thing to realize. If the State of New York spends in a single year thirty millions of money upon its defectives and delinquents, it is an arraignment of the church in the civilization of which it is a part, for, among these are the fewest, in proportion to the whole, that are other than Christian in origin. But note this fact also, that it is proposed in a city of four millions and more of people, during a single year, if it is possible to secure so much from the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, to spend in the neighborhood of one hundred and sixty million dollars in processes either *administrative, repressive,* or *remedial.* Now there must be something wrong in the conception of the church as a part of society. The church has been busy with its vested interests, its nice distinctions, with elaborating its ritual, building its sacerdotal orders, with many things that have diverted it from the thought of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. It has been the most expensive institution, judged by what it has done, in the world; but we cannot afford to abolish it because if it were abolished to-day it would begin again tomorrow, and less well I fear! If a man wants to worship in a church of our Unitarian faith he shall not trouble the minister nor the congregation, unless his soul is in travail, with his speculative difficul-

ties; and if a man come and say he believe in Jesus as the supreme lord of heaven, which we do not believe, let him enter his name just the same, and come into the church, busy with life's activities, without letting his speculative theories interfere with his fellowship; let him sit down and hold still under its ministry, and see what happens to his mind. His speculative theories do not interest us, life-amelioration of human conditions interests us more. "Be no longer children, tossed to and fro," never knowing exactly what your thought is—"blown about by every wind of doctrine." Here is the essence of the whole matter, the best way to escape being "blown about by every wind of doctrine" *is to have a motive-power, that is not dependent on the weather.* The motive-power that lies in the adorable Fatherhood of God and the possible brotherhood of man leads the soul straight on, independent of the prevailing theological weather. I can no more conceive of the Unitarian faith being swerved from its course by some new eccentricity of philosophy or preponderance of influence, than of the stars being turned from their orbits by the passage of some meteor in their midst. No; the reason for believing anything is to make life better and sweeter and more perfect, and if it does not do that you have the wrong motive power or your engine is weak. Mr. Beecher, you remember, used to tell of the "steamer that had a six-foot boiler and a nine-foot whistle, and every time it blew its whistle the steamer stopped." So it is, when your religion has not motive power. It is a kind of frivolity, we think, for men to quarrel over opinions which cannot alter the fact of the brotherhood

of the race or the Fatherhood of God, or the fact that we are saved by character. It is a kind of frivolity to form cliques for discussion of speculative opinions when life is needing all the reinforcement of purity and purpose. So that in spite of the seeming slight that there is in the phrase, I must repeat the saying of the apostle to the citizens of Ephesus, the city that was the Paris of Asia Minor, "Be no longer children, tossed about by every wind of doctrine"; there is a religion for grown-up people, it is not a game, it is not a puzzle, it is not a conundrum, not a bit of acting, *but a religion.* "Be no longer children, tossed to and fro," unstable, without centre, without ballast, "but, speaking the truth in love"— you can almost make a truth of error if you speak it in love, so potent is the motive —"grow up unto him who is the head, even Christ," and whose essential teaching was: "One is your Father, even God, and all ye are brethren."

III

THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS

In these five sentences expressing Unitarian faith, the third is that we believe in "the leadership of Jesus." We have no creed, but these five sentences answer the purpose. No Congregational church, either of the orthodox or Unitarian group, has, properly speaking, any creed; it has usually a covenant, a statement of purpose. An exception may be noted. "The First Congregational Church in New York," always Unitarian, was organized in 1819. When it entered upon the use of its present building in 1855, it was determined to call it All Souls' Church. Its distinguished pastor, Dr. Bellows, decided that no person coming into its membership should be asked any questions about his opinions, and such covenant as it up to that time used was set aside. No concern is felt primarily as to what the people think (their theological conclusions), the only solicitude is *that they think!* For the docile mind shall be guided of the Eternal Spirit. So in all our Churches we do not aim at conformity of opinion; that is impossible; if it were possible it would be on the day before the death of all the thinking world; mental paralysis would occur within twenty-four hours of total uniformity of opinion. What we do insist upon is a certain *main direction.* Many men say to me: "We are all aiming for the same place and travelling by different roads."

Now that is one of the cheap fallacies in which shallow people seek to excuse the thing they do not quite approve by trying to unite with the people they would approve of if they could. I am not aiming for any place; the only place toward which we are all moving is that to-morrow-of-death, about which we do not feel great concern, because it is in the keeping of the same great overshadowing Companion of our days of life, whose company is very good, and whom we completely trust. But we are all under one leadership; we hold to the leadership of Jesus of Nazareth, and it is the significance of that leadership and our alliance with it, that I seek now to explain as well as I can.

What is the use of a leader? A leader is not sufficiently equipped when he has a great courage. He must have gone that way before! The very courage of a leader, if he have not experience of the road may be the cause of his betrayal; for his audacity may be sufficient, when his experience is naught. When you are moving to a charge of cavalry the leader knows no more than you; but when you are pioneering in the wilderness or finding your way through a jungle, it is well to have somebody in the lead who has gone that way before, or, at least, has judgment as to what a jungle is, what the jungle means, and knowledge of things like to the path he treads, which he shall be able to transfer to us, those he leads, so transferring to us the security that is in his own heart. Courage is not enough; judgment, balance of faculty, self-control, and the absence of self-seeking, all these are necessary to the leader. Now the use of Jesus of Nazareth to the world is displayed in its richness by the

attempts upon its variety. I suppose no human being has ever lived who has been put to such manifold uses as Jesus; and the depth of that mine of unfailing treasure is to be discovered in the variety of those who work on its veins; it seems inexhaustible, it is as interesting to-day as it was eighteen hundred years ago, as interesting as it was in the fifteenth century, as interesting as it was when the fathers of this country set up here in the name of Christ what they hoped might be a theocracy. It is an inexhaustible mine of varied riches. As Unitarians we are content to work a very little vein of "native ore"; in that mine that we call the life of Christ great "galleries" have been opened up, and sometimes, when you have let enough light in to see what is in them, you discover only placards telling you which way to turn "through the workings," and what you may expect of doctrinal output. We have not much interest in that; except that it has its sanctities because good people have held the views we cannot entertain. We are not interested in speculation with respect to the nature of Christ; we suppose that if he is to guide humanity, he must have been human. The sweep of an angel's wings is a poor substitute for the print of feet on the road; I want to travel where somebody has gone before, and the sweep of pinions overhead and the flitting of immaterial spirits in the heavens does not answer the purpose of our plodding humanity; we seek the "main travelled road"! But when you realize that Jesus of Nazareth was a workingman, living by his trade, till he entered on his work as a minister of religion; a man who had friends so intimate as to lean on his bosom and some so treach-

erous as to sell him to his foes, you are considering what sounds like human nature; and if you can find out the terms, not on which he was created, but on which he existed, find out the conditions under which he lived, you will have entered on a fruitful study and may let the rest go by. We hold to the leadership of Jesus of Nazareth. He was working out the plan of life that is our problem also to solve, and we want to find what he did with it. I suppose I speak for many sincere people when I say there is nothing we are so interested in as living so that we need not be ashamed when we come to die. We do not expect to be afraid; most people are not afraid no matter how they have lived, because death is a quiet time for any easy task, but we are vastly concerned that we shall live so that we *shall not be ashamed to die.* I want to feel that I can hand back the talent given to me, with some kind of interest on it, to the Master who committed it to me as a steward. It is an awful thing to think one may have had sixty or seventy years to live and have made nothing out of it, but money. Think of the disgrace of that! To have simply been a scoop to rake in things as any gambler's table might show, when the game is over and the bank has won out and the player is bankrupt. It is simply unmitigated disgrace, when human life shows such a result. But if in the process called living you have been able to build up life, to solve its perplexities, so that they shall not be a puzzle to men again, if you have been able to adjust yourself to living, so as to make a code of good behaviour for other men, and to have borne its pressure so as to make every man feel that when it drops on him he is crowned

with honor to bear it, not crushed under it, then you have reached the very simplicities and efficiency of the experience of life.

How did Jesus lead? In the first place, he taught as we believe, that the business of life is to abandon oneself to the will of God, not by a system of fatalism in which is no choice, but by deliberate overture, by unrestricted largess to give oneself over unto the will of God. Jesus is called "God's unspeakable gift!" That is his distinction. He seems never to have been on his own errand but always on the errand of the Most High: "My Father worketh hitherto and I work!" When we crowd and shove in life we are on our own errand, but when we commit ourself to the current of the divine influence, declaring that what becomes of us is of least importance provided we fulfil the design of the Being that made us, we are not on our own errand but on God's errand, "working out what God has wrought in us!" There are people who have never accomplished anything so far as the world can see, people of whom blind Milton said, "They also serve who only stand and wait;" people who have had no events in their lives that would make a biography, who seem to have been even a little short of emotion, not temptestuous lives, torn up by the roots and replanted every day or so to the great detriment of their growth and limiting of their product; people who seem to belong to nobody; they are not their own, but God's; from the beginning, as the measure of their sacrifice, as the plan of their life, they have determined to be altogether God's. Now that was the life of Christ. "Thy will be done"— that was the first element in the life of

Jesus of Nazareth. So when somebody gets so anxious about the truth of a doctrine that he wants to burn someone else at the stake, he has forgotten that that somebody else is a member of the Father's family, and that the Father has him in holy keeping. "Why should I feel another man's mistake more than his sickness or poverty? In love I should; but anger is not love, nor wisdom neither. Wherefor gently more," says George Herbert, cautioning the over-zealous spirits of his age. Suppose any group of devoted men and women are utterly abandoned to the will of God, then if life presses on them hardly they shall not complain; if it appoints them delight they shall accept it with thanksgiving; if children are born into their arms they hold them as treasures of the living God, they become trustees of life; if they go on the road of the multitude of the unfulfilled Madonnas of the race, they still shall be without reproach. Nothing but the will of God! —"I and my Father are one," that is the message of that leadership to which we dedicate ourselves.

More than this; we believe in the leadership of Jesus as a life of *self-sacrifice, in a higher sense still.* This abandonment of the soul to the will of God is simply motive, but in practice it has a variety of applications. I cannot commend asceticism to any other man except as one commends surgery to save life; I think the world was made to be enjoyed; there is such a small proportion of it desert that it would seem as if the rest were meant to be cultivated as gardens; the joy of living allures me. You ask how that comports with the idea of self-sacrifice. It does comport with it I believe; for self-sacrifice is *not doing without something but do-*

ing without that which is of less value than something else; the values of life are the first consideration; only by this means can we rise to "eternal values." Most of us do not fail because we have not enough work, or enough opportunity, but for the lack of proportion; and we are forever thinking it is the weather vane that turns the mill! And it never is. The weather vane simply indicates which way the wind blows, it is well to regard it if you are going to sow or reap; but for the rest the business of life in its deeper realities commands first attention, and the failure is because we are out of proportion, out of drawing, distorted, malformed, in our estimate of life; we consume power trying to readjust ourselves. The illustrations of this are many; how we emphasize the wrong thing, elevating the value that is only transient, laying stress on the thing that is only for the moment and has no motive and cannot last. The normal life is the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the life of self-denial in which the things that are best are put in the first place! We have talked of self-denial as though it were doing without everything. Simeon Stylites on his pillar is falling to pieces by slow decay, and the veriest laborer that helped to set the pillar up was more effective than he. He has been doing the work of a man, not the work of a scarecrow!

The leadership of Jesus has another quality of which we claim our share. He was a pioneer! He was a man who was striking out new paths; he refused to be dictated to by the conventions of his time; there never was such a heretic in the world; he was not *orthodox* in the least degree; and yet he was so full of spiritual sympathy that he could go

to the services of the Temple, in which he did not find nourishment, except as he brought it with him, celebrate their feasts with them, celebrate the Passover with them just before he was to die. We find him after his twelfth year, and so it was probably through all those silent years of which we know nothing, sharing the worship of his people, and yet wherever human life was concerned he rose above the ritual, saying "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath!" People who think of him as a meek and mild-eyed sufferer have forgotten the stalwart shoulders of the out-of-doors man on which was flung the cloak of the Roman soldier; "the manliness of Christ" is one of the neglected aspects of his life. So we do not hesitate; inspired by his example, we do not hesitate, as he did not hesitate, to contradict and contravene tradition in the interest of immediate human good. He was the least iconoclastic of noble spirits; we might say of him too, as was said of Emerson, that "he was an iconoclast without a hammer, who removed our idols from their pedestals so reverently, that it seemed an act of worship!" And yet the tone he used at times would seem unfitting in us. There is no "changer-of-money" who might come into our temples that we should feel might be driven out with "a scourge of cords"; yet that was his fanatic outburst in the Temple court, and it comes down to us with a kind of relief that he could overflow with indignation and move under the impulse of a great wrath. I do not doubt that they deserved to be thus expelled and their tables overturned, but we have other means now, because we are not at such a disadvantage as to num-

bers as he was. The fanatic is always the man who has more to carry than he conveniently can. He heats easily because he is overmatched. "It hath been said by them of old time" (Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy), "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy" (there are people now, and there were people then who thought if you quoted from Scripture you must be right, not so Jesus, not so we), "*But I say unto you!*"—here is a carpenter contradicting the Book of The Law, a peasant man saying "I say" and making his utterance reverberate against the background of the past—until it echoes on our late day—"I say unto you Ye shall love your enemy and do good to them that despitefully use you." You shall go together to life's contentions as "the children of your Father which is in heaven, for He maketh his sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and the unjust." God does not "play favorites," neither must you. He dared to say such things as this, though it cost him his life. People are not often brave enough nowadays to die of their courage, but they should be willing to. Then the test of your following is whether the things you hold most tenaciously are what you would risk dying for. The papers of today are discussing whether Hell is a place or a condition. Is that worth dying for? It is simply frivolous! We have outgrown that; it does not matter whether it is a place or a condition, or anything at all; our business is to make a heaven of this life, and that will take up all our time and effort, if we are really busy about it. So whether you are following Jesus or not may be judged by

whether you are utterly committed to the will of God. Do you want your own way? Then you are no disciple of his. Are you determined to have your own way? Then make your bargain with some diabolical power, if there be any such, for you are no follower of Jesus of Nazareth. To be truly committed to the will of God, that is the first requirement of discipleship, and the second is self-denial that puts life in its proper order and relation. A young man, who refuses to be a smug city curate that he may do missionary work among people neglected and remote, understands that; he has found the right relationships of life. And last and most of all you shall test whether you are going Jesus' road by the way in which you can look upon it as your road, the road to be followed and made possible to others. I always think of Jesus, the Leader, as calling down from some height whither he has won the way, calling down to us to "come up, up, up!" Now when the guide calls from above and you see him against the sky upon some beetling crag of the acclivity up which he has climbed, the first thought which comes to you is that *there must be a path,* by which he went. Leaders are not let down from heaven; they climb and are bruised and tired and footsore while making a way for us. The leaders of the Unitarian faith did that; and if there were no other motive, there would still be the desire to vindicate the courage of these pioneers through the jungle of their time. I see them up yonder; *there must be a way!* The Guide has gone over the road and calls from above that the view is splendid; it is worth while to climb where he has gone; and when we have climbed to where he stands, there

should be one look possibly into his face who has called us and shown us the way, one look of gratitude and love, then — *we try to see what he sees!* That is the use of leadership, that is the service of the leader — to make us see what he sees! only the reflection is in his face, yonder lies the view whither his eyes are turned, over the great stretch of God's good world. The use of being on a height is to get a better view, and that is not in the face of the guide, though it is indicated by the direction in which he looks. We no longer depend upon the guide *to tell us* what the view is; *it is now our view also.* And that is where we part company with our friends who magnify the leadership of Jesus in ways we cannot follow: they call him God; he was not God. God must be so great that there is only room in the universe for one, the Ultimate Reality of which everything is the expression and the manifestation; and in that sense Jesus was a revealer of God. So also when our friends say to us that we are not Christian because we do not believe in the atonement, we ask them what they would have us do — believe some impossible doctrine or lay down our lives for the welfare of men? — which would be an atonement? — not that we do that in any proper way; I am not exalting the people of our kind above the common, but our believing an impossible proposition concerning a transaction that is neither reasonable nor historic does not constitute Jesus, the saviour of men; he saves men who teaches them the laws of moral health, for salvation is moral health, and there is none other. We cannot follow where these "Christians" lead, but we will follow where he leads; and he leads to the making the world such

a place as the children of God should inhabit. To illustrate this for a moment: there is not one of us who bears the name of Christ that *should* be satisfied to have a single double-decked tenement in New York, and yet there are people who complain when they have to remodel their property, their revenue-producing rat-traps, that they may not spring upon the necks of those who inhabit them. More indignation probably is entertained against the Tenement House Commission than was ever felt because of the need of it, because men find it hard to pay out good money on places that are paying well now at the expense of human life. And the man who has a tenement that he will not put in condition for human beings does not follow Christ and should be ashamed to call himself Unitarian, or even human. I had a splendid boy come to me who had inherited a block of tenements paying thirty per cent and not *fit* for a human being to live in, and he asked me what he should do about them. I told him there was only one thing to do. He was just twenty-one; and after a few months he came to me and told me he had had them all pulled down and new houses built and now they were full of happy people. That boy had found out what Jesus meant; his old uncle who had left him the property had gone to his grave without ever finding it out. One had developed a human soul, the other had taken thirty per cent!

We need not much discuss how men are saved but let us try to find some method by which salvation of men can be accomplished in our time. That is the meaning of all social agitation; even when mistaken, it is an effort to establish the rule of the Christ among the children of men. So when it is

said that we do not believe in Christ I suppose it troubles some people, but it only troubles us because it is so stupid. What is it to believe in Christ? To believe something you are saying about him? Some description someone has written about him? To believe everything that is said about him in the Old Testament or the New? In the New Testament there is a composite picture of Jesus, and through all the differences one consistent whole appears; but it is not this or that detail that you have to believe but a life, and to believe in him is to transfer that life to your own time and being. To believe in Christ is not simply to go back to the first century to get a model for imitation. Every now and then men try to do that, but it cannot be done successfully. Jesus did not know enough about business to live in New York on the terms on which he lived in Galilee, even the climate would not allow of life on the terms he lived in Galilee, a life-from-hand-to-mouth. What the climate forbids cannot be a necessary principle of life. Two hundred and fifty thousand people were living from hand-to-mouth perforce last winter in a great city, but it did not necessarily make them holy; it only made them miserable. Then what shall we do with this life of Jesus Christ? Find out his motive power! Find the steam that turns the wheel! The same power turns the Hindu prayer wheel and the turbine at Niagara, so much pressure to the square foot, so much impulse for the momentum adjusted to it; but who will place the Hindu's prayer wheel in the torrents of Niagara? You would find it down the whirlpool rapids, all its prayers answered, the prayer wheel out of business. No, the purpose

of the life of Christ is for us to adjust his motives to the present time; it is quite as possible to put them into Wall Street, into the quiet home life, into every human situation you can conceive of now, as into the life of Galilee. I want to live his life not in the terms of the first century but of the twentieth. The enrichment of life by his motives, the regulation of life by his life; not the imitation of a life lived in Galilee two thousand years ago, but a life in New York here and now, is what we are to expect and achieve. The adjustment may be different, the result must be the same. Mrs. Humphrey Ward's statement in "Robert Elsmere" is what we come back to: "The business of this time is to reconceive the life of Christ." Christ shall be born again, *when we have been born — anew — from above!*

IV

SALVATION BY CHARACTER

There have been a great many statements made as to what Unitarians do not believe. There are a great many statements of doctrine and theological fancies that we do not believe; but there is also a very real body of faith; and the statements we have been considering are sufficient as an outline of this fact. Let us now inquire what it is "to be saved."

It is our studious effort not to speak with disparagement of the religious life of any people; but it is necessary to the understanding of history, and the history of human thought, that from time to time we speak frankly of the beliefs of those whose opinions we cannot accept, but whose religious life is always subject of respect. I think a distinction must be made between the opinions held and the life led, and happily as a tribute to the essential integrity of human nature many people live beautiful lives who have very queer opinions. Theology is the history of human thought on divine things, as ethics is the history of human behaviour and its motives; and when we speak of "salvation by character" we immediately confront the opposition in thought of those who believe salvation to be procurable by some other means. There is no one who actually thinks a wicked man can go to heaven, but many think a wicked man may postpone getting ready a long while, and make a

very quick transit on conditions immediately accepted. We do not believe that. We hold very sincerely to the statement that "as is the heavenly, such also are those that are heavenly"; and that between destiny and preparation there is conjunction so immediate that to separate them means loss. Character-loss is the failure of function; and as we shall have to deal next with the ascent of man through the stages of progress by which he becomes human, so now let me say that his becoming man at all was a rise through infinite stages of progress and that being man and becoming human he is on the way to be divine. So John Fiske calls one of his great little books "The Destiny of Man in the Light of his Origin." He began not man, and he is man, and being man it is just as important, in our thought, that he should be completely human as that he should be completely man. He has arrived as man; now proceed the stages of development of that which has arrived to its fulfillment, namely the human; but he is not yet perhaps completely human, just as he was animal long ages before he was completely man.

The field of our enquiry is not remote or far to seek. It has nothing to do with a condition after death; as to what that condition is no one knows; each one has his guess, but no one knows. The limitation of our knowledge is that no one can know that which he has not experienced; beyond that barrier there is no power to go, but a man may have a radiant hope, a firm belief, a flight of faith, that comes back reinforced by its contacts with the unseen. But to say that he knows what shall be on the to-morrow-of-death is to say he knows what he has

not experienced, and that *no man can know*. I shall try later to give you reasons for thinking that *we do not die*. We believe that man is an immortal spirit; but when you speak of "salvation," it is perilous and confusing to speak of it as remote and far to seek and difficult to obtain. I am not going to review here the opinions that are based on the various theories of atonement, by virtue of which salvation comes to man. All such theories however are based on the assumption that man is "depraved"; and that is something we do not believe. *Total depravity would make salvation impossible*, no matter how procured, designed or sought. It means rottenness to the core; and if a farmer will not plant in his field things in that condition, let us give God credit for thinking it would not be worth while trying to save that which was altogether depraved. Let us rather enquire what it is to be saved here and now.

I have already indicated by the phrase "completely human" the point of view. What is it to be human? It is not simply to belong to the genus *homo*. Said Terence: "I am a man, and nothing that is human is foreign to me;" and the theatre echoed with applause of one who had discovered one of the uses of man, namely to be human and alive to all that shares his humanity. If you examine our humanity, as we call it, you will discover strange tricks of it. We boast of it when we are hopeful and despair of it when our hope fails. We excuse our faults by saying they are human, by saying "it is human to err"; but we are wrong in this; we do wrong because we are *not human yet*. Take a business transaction, in which we think our humanity

is most exercised — we think when we can trade something, we are engaged in a human transaction, whereas two ants that meet on the road will shift burdens, and beetles will push together their offensive little ball which they are going to take to their hole in some rotten log; the coöperation we boast of has been outdistanced by bees and ants and wasps; in every wasp's nest of a certain variety there is a paralysed spider, into which the venom of the wasp has been injected that it may be kept in a kind of cold storage to be ready food for the young wasp when it appears. These are the animal instincts that survive in us and these instincts fail in us in comparison with the lower animals. The scent that the dog has does not belong to us, else life would be unbearable; the eye of the fly sees far more than any human eye; the eye of the eagle sees further, and the swoop of the bird of prey puts all our tricks of finance to shame, for he knows where his prey is and how to adjust his flight to strike it; the slow crawl-up of the lion and tiger make all our approaches to an evil deed seem awkward. These are not human transactions; they belong to the lower ranges of our instincts that in some sort have survived, and our human virtues on their under side are graded down to an evil name because they approach from the standpoint of reason to the basis of instinct and the thing that is admirable in the beast is despicable in the man, and this must be because our virtues, being human are better than our instincts, being animal. So we ask, what is it to be human? It is to frame and fashion and shape ourselves toward the divine qualities that we think are in God. We boast of our power of thought, but

that is not a divine quality, we share that with the brute below us and simply hold it in larger development; but when you speak of the *divine* thought, you are not speaking of the helpless little performance that we engage in when we put one and one together and deduce a third, when we work out a proposition and think we are thinking, when we give our whole minds to the subject and then do not arrive. Is that what we mean when we think of the Divine Mind that knows everything from the beginning that holds an ever-present now in the grasp of all thought? Our thinking is a feeling in the dark to find our way; His perfect intelligence must be the realization of an instant fact. So we go further, and higher, to find what is human, if it is to be like God. There is one word in the language that may illustrate this, the word *love*. You stand in the Zoölogical Garden before the cage of a wild creature that for the purposes of human knowledge has been kept in captivity; and you watch the lioness paw her cubs over and over, and see how she knows to draw them to her for their sustenance, and you say, "See how she loves them." So she does, but she does not love you; she loves the thing that is of her body, she feeds it with the milk that is hers, licks its head to make its coat smooth, fondles it and looks with anxiety at your approach for fear you would do harm to it, and that is love of a kind. Then you run through all the range of the sex problem from top to bottom and use the word *love*, and finally above the animal instinct, above the animal conception of motherhood, above the ranges of lust and inordinate desire, above the legitimacy of passion, above all these things, two embodiments of love

appear that take on themselves at once the qualities that are divine. The first is the love of soul for soul and the intimacy of the inmost life in which one human creature understands another and cherishes it for love's sake, because soul has met soul in one indissoluble union and they are no longer two, but one. So said Jesus: "I and my Father are one." And the divine affinities vindicate themselves in terms that are human. The man who has reached that, whether as to his friend, or some divine woman, or his child, or God, in the measure in which he has reached it, the divine relationship has come into his soul; he is being saved, because he is vindicating his humanity. And the second illustration is found in the power that is given us to love the unlovely; it is not really a thing to be boasted of that when one soul discovers another soul that belongs to it love shall arise; but when you go further and come to love the unlovely, when you can love the wrongdoer even though the wrong has been done to you or those dear to you, when you can love under the conditions that are inimical to your peace, and endeavor by love to regenerate some hard human heart that has been struck by a divine touch, like the rock of Moses, when you can bring the streams of regeneration out of the depths of human affection even for those who do not ask or deserve or appreciate them, then you have reached the real function of humanity, which is to cleanse the world *by loving it into salvation.* Well, we have none of us fully reached that yet! But did you ever have a day when justice was done you or revenge was granted you that was half so sweet as the day when you somehow came to love some one that did not love you? The one is like

holding the scale into which the Roman conquerer throws his sword, the other like the descent of the Holy Spirit that says "This is my beloved in whom I am well pleased."

So to be saved is to be wholly human first of all. Do not suppose because you walk round like other animals — a bear or a monkey can stand erect — do not suppose you are human on that account, or because you have fine thoughts or strong thoughts or logical thoughts now and then; but the moment the heart opens for the hospitalities that are divine and you are enamored of goodness, which is different from being enamored of beauty, different from being swept off your feet by desire — when you are enamored of goodness until it seems to you the one good in the world, in that moment salvation has made a long stride toward the perfect human in you.

I know a man who did not know he was being saved, but was nevertheless in active process of salvation. He had made a very considerable fortune in two years by the most ignoble practice of the law that it is possible for a trained lawyer to follow. He had spent his days and coined his fortunes by defending, as he had the right to do, the evil-doer, but because he would have the evil-doer escape; in the day when that man said to a group of his friends: "All this is wrong, the money is ill-made, the associations are degrading; I pursue in my office interests I cannot introduce into my family, my wife and children cannot share with any comfort the advantages I bring to them out of the degrading practice, I will quit it," he was in process of being saved. There never was a man at an altar of re-

pentance at a revival meeting who thought he had "found salvation," who had more truly found it, than this man had; he had cut away from the sources of his profits in the interests of his soul. It makes no difference what you call it. The plane of salvation for the human soul is in the soul itself, it cannot be imported nor imputed nor imparted to it from the outside; it is in the soul itself; and when all the processes of desire and all the instincts of aggrandisement and ambition have been taken hold of and reversed in their whole action, a great psychological change has taken place that can be demonstrated by scientific enquiry and accepted by spiritual insight. It is the reversal of all the processes of human life; the man is headed another way, and intent upon a new life. "Old things have passed away and behold all things have become new!"

Now why have I spoken of this in a series which declares for the reality of the Unitarian faith? Because we think it is fundamental. I do not doubt that a remote salvation, *sufficiently imagined,* will react for good upon any soul that entertains it. I do not doubt that every theory of the atonement ever proposed in the Christian church has not only its converts, but its sanctified believers. For the fact is that when the soul undertakes to believe a thing altogether the correctness of the thing does not determine the effect. Many an error has been so spiritually apprehended and so faithfully believed and so consecrated in the soul of the believer, that it has had the power to reconstruct the soul; and you have only to remember that truth in the scientific world has been as much served by error as by its own progressive suggestions of development

as truth, to see what I mean. Every intellectual error carried to its utmost for moral reasons has had its beneficent results. But no matter how far this may be the case, how completely it may be beneficent to the person who entertains the opinion, it is fundamental that salvation shall be immediate and out of the material at hand. Unless the mind is to its core dishonest — and there are such minds, that perhaps never *told* a lie, but are essentially dishonest — salvation is possible in the moment when that mind believes in the ultimate triumph of goodness, because it begins then to work toward the betterment of conditions. Our difficulty is that we suppose when somebody is behaving better, he has been made good. If you can get people to give up drinking or shape up the external behaviour of life in some other way, you think they are saved — well, for the purposes of society they are, to some extent; for the purposes of home life and common decency, they are so far saved. But how can you put that in the same category with what happens in a human soul when all its motives have been changed and the complexion of its thought altered, and its aspirations have come in place of its debasements, and valiant suffering where it cannot be cured, and willingness to sacrifice where it cannot work, where it would rather be crushed to an impalpable dust than serve the world as it has served it by the denial of its best self? One is the deportment of a well-trained behaviour; the other is the birth of a human soul, here, now, instantly!

So the phrase which we read in the Book of Acts is a phrase which with all the aberrations from it is still potent: "The Lord added to the church daily

such *as were being saved.*" Think of Paul as the illustration. Time was when he was a member of the Sanhedrin, certainly time was when in his hand he held the commission of the High Priest "to bring bound to Jerusalem" those who believed in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, when he preached threatenings and slaughter, when he "thought within himself he ought to do many things that were contrary" to the new religion — but there was his salvation, he was doing what he thought he ought to do, even when he held the garments of them that took the life of Stephen, the martyr. That is what was on one page of his history; but presently we see him feeling his way, led by the hand, after the blinding light on the Damascus road, when he "heard the voice;" and then in penury, outcast, exposed to every danger; but beneath and through it all, the growing of his soul, till from the prison in Rome he can breathe through the bars no longer "threatening and slaughter," but a jubilate, such as never was breathed forth when he returned with the bound believers. Something had happened to Saul of Tarsus which means being saved, a spiritual translation of character had enabled him to speak this new tongue!

V

THE HOPE FOR HUMANITY

We now come to the final statement in the series by James Freeman Clarke; that we believe in the Fatherhood of God; in the Brotherhood of Man; in the Leadership of Jesus; in Salvation by Character; and in *the Progress of Man Upward and Onward Forever.* I have called this the hope for humanity.

We do not know many things; we live more by working-hypothesis than by actual facts. And I suppose this is a divine arrangement for the education of man; the working-hypothesis expands the ideal, and absolute fact is the limitation of enquiry. You may get beyond the fact *by a working hypothesis;* but if you dwell in the fact, then you have done. But we are the prophets of a great hope, and when we say there shall be "progress of mankind onward and upward forever," we no more know what that progress shall be than we know what forever is. We do not know the meaning of forever, but we know in part the content of life and some of its possibilities, and on that we base our hope. I always feel in approaching this subject, as Emerson expressed himself when he said, "I think one abstains from speaking and printing much concerning immortality of the soul, because when he comes to the end of his statement the hungry eyes that run through it close

disappointed, and the listeners are left unsatisfied; and by these hesitating conclusions they feel themselves wronged by the omissions which we are compelled to make. I myself," he continues, "am a better believer, and all serious souls are better believers in immortality than we can give ground for, and the proof of that is that we are better lovers than we can ever tell why; and the parity of reason is absolute." And the experience of the race is ground for our confidence; we go to sleep every night in the confidence that we shall awake again, and that automatic act of daily occurrence and all the aspirations of the race are in themselves ground for our attitude of mind. I have heard men say they would be glad to tell men they shall go to heaven and live forever; I suppose it is natural to say that, because they feel so helpless, but I cannot say that I want to tell you that. I should regard it as an absolute misfortune if I could demonstrate to you here and now the certainty of life beyond the grave. Why? Because you would be too easily comforted, and to be too easily comforted is to fall too easily into despair, just as easy thinking is the degradation of the mind and easy loving the abuse of the sanctities of life, and easy praying becomes mechanical, and going by an easy road weakens the sinews of life. To demonstrate to you what is behind death would be to destroy your faith in the integrity of life, and you would wait and postpone and grow lax and indifferent, waiting for the lifting of the curtain when you had not rehearsed the play. There is nothing in such assurance except the slackening of the sinews of life. So if we do not say we are certain, we still say we have an immortal

hope; and the ground of that hope we can easily state. There is no occasion now for reviewing the way in which the passion for eternal life has worked through history. It is not a desire simply, not a habit of life, not anything less than an absorbing passion that forbids me to die, protests against extinction for man; if the doctrine of hell were true or thinkable or believable, I would rather take my chances in its gruesome horrors than be snuffed out of existence, for I could at least have it out with the devil and his angels. But we do not have to reckon with any such awful alternative; the passion for immortality was phrased by Buckle in his essay upon "Mill on Liberty": "I cannot believe that God has constituted the world upon a plan by which it conspires to deceive us?" Why did he write that? Because in the midst of the writing of that essay in which cold reason and experience of the world were combined, Buckle heard as he came to the last pages the report of his mother's death. His one passion, his overmastering affection, his inextinguishable desire for communion with her were the inspiration of these last lines in which he declares, as we declare, that he could not believe in a Being who would organize a world to deceive us. So we have become accustomed to thinking that every flying signal of instinct is to be attended to, every beckoning hand of desire leads somewhere, every natural appetite is to be honored, directed, regulated, instructed, and the passion for eternal life is fundamental to the constitution of man. If I were going through the Arctic region, where was not a green thing to be seen, where all the world was frozen to the heart, and I saw a fluttering flag upon a com-

of ice, I should know that some one had been that way before me, and had probably *cached* the provisions I needed; and I should find stored for me who was expected that way the resources of some other traveller. Now down the ages they have been fluttering the signal that they shall not die, that they believed in life; and they challenge our faith that we shall project our lives on the theory that we are to live forever.

Now as to the conditions that have attended the doctrine of immortality. A sense of existence, a sense of life is on us. Do you realize that there is no human being who can state the contrary? To the man who says "when you breathe your last you have done," to him I say that when I have breathed my last I have done with breath; but what I am aware of and conscious of *now is life;* and it rests with him to prove that it shall ever cease to be; and of course that would propose to him an impossibility, because he cannot prove that which he has not experienced. He will tell you he fainted once and *was unconscious;* but if there is one thing sure in the scientific world it is that fainting and sleep and the suspension of consciousness have no physiological resemblance to the condition in which the system is found when death has supervened; so to say he was unconscious, or asleep, or in a trance, is all beside the mark; he has no material that will disprove my assertion that I live. For I do not live in the machinery of life. Note this condition that exists. The order of development of the race has taken us out of the lower levels; it is not busy with making new arms or legs or eyes for people, it does not repair the machinery any more, as it

does in the lower animals; all the stress has been taken off physical life for us. I suppose Milo the Greek was more perfect in body than any one of us, and the State supported him and built a monument to him because he could carry an ox — the great athlete in perfect form; but even the State has somewhat modified its enthusiasm for perfection of form and there are still universities left that believe they are seats of learning and not simply schools of gymnastics. The whole line of development now deals with the powers of man that constitute him human. Mark this as an illustration. We went for years under the pall and darkness of the term "survival of the fittest," and realized that if that were a good working theory then a large proportion of the race ought to be snuffed out; we ought to feel the enthusiasm of the Greek and Roman idea, by which they exposed the female child to death because they were too numerous, and threw Œpidus, the cripple, out to die, because he was of imperfect build. We went under that shadow, so few were fit physically, so many were emaciated, anæmic, crippled, cabined in imperfect form, and we asked, Great God, is it possible that when we are compassionate we are violating the laws of evolution? Is it true that the hospital is a profane place; that the orthopædic institution should be suspended; that there should be no longer any care of the blind and diseased; are we to believe that the survival of the fittest is the law of God based on the brawn of life? And then it dawned on us that the whole stress of evolution had been changed, and it was not a question longer of the survival of the fittest in terms of physical strength and power, it was the moral stress which

now claimed our attention; it was a question whether *we* who were judging the "unfit" were fit to survive, and the proof of that was found *in the care of the unfit!* That is what happened. Are you strong enough to lift? That is not proof as to whether you will survive except as judged *by what you lift.* I remember when a little baby was brought to one of our societies with the mark of the nails of its father's boot-heel in its infant flesh; by all the laws of the older theories of evolution, it should have been strangled; but there were deep-breasted women and compassionate hands that in a year's time made that little child a rosy, healthy babe; and the proof, that was to show *we were fit to survive,* lay in what was done for that sick child. The whole plane of life has been lifted to the development of the moral power of the world. We have come out of our dreams to make them true; and risen from our knees to answer our own prayers. Of course I need not say what I think about the atrocity of the old doctrines of heaven and hell as based upon the argument for the justice of God. A postponed justice, whether to punish sin or to reward virtue, is a justice gone astray. The fact that there are 5,000 untried cases in a single court is not to the credit of the administration of the city of New York. Delayed justice is an indictment of the administration that makes the delay possible. So a remote heaven has ceased to be attractive. What we want to know now is how to transplant the idea to the soil of the world, so that heaven shall grow and hell shall cease. But the doctrine that dealt with the future life as reward or punishment was based on this mistaken idea of compensation, of justice, of our

ordered life, on terms that were fairer; and do you not see how it must be repudiated by thinking men because it argues a mistake by the Creator; and heaven was then invited to lay its lowest streets upon earth and hell forbidden to darken our skies with its murk, because we wanted to save the character of God; and the justice we had relegated to Him, we assumed in turn ourselves, and declared for a *heaven that is now;* and a hell that, if it is at all, must be reformatory, remedial, and finally pass away. It would be a pity if we had not travelled as far in religion as scientific penology has come; penology no longer recognizes the idea of taking the criminal out of the community simply, so that the community may be safe, but also that the criminal may be made fit for the community; and when the tragedy of life has thus shaped itself to virtue, it behooves religion to learn its lesson there.

What then is left to us? It is a good deal like asking a sculptor what is left when his statue has been broken. Well, his statue is broken, or he has misinterpreted his design, or he has fallen ill in the prosecution of his task, and you say to him, what is left? And he replies to you, Genius is left, and *the quarry is left;* and those two things brought together shall make the image anew. Everything is left. We have called in the outposts of the future life and bade men strengthen the citadels of life. Cultivate the nature of man, ennoble the history of man, make a man a sharer of the eternal life now and here, and as year after year an old church sees go out of its gates into the unknown its members and adherents, what do we do? Sit down in speculation as to what is become of them? No, we fall

back on the statement of my old friend who said to me as we walked through the woods, he having just laid away the wife who for forty years had been his companion: "There must be some beautiful place for her, for she would not fit any other." The fitness of his daily companion was the proof to him that she could not cease to be. The president of one of our great colleges said to me that as he was climbing over the Gemmi Pass in the Alps he came up by slow ascent and when he reached the summit, while he could see the place from which he had come, he could not see the place whither he was going; there was nothing in sight; his trail ended at a cliff down which there seemed to lead a goat's track; and he turned to a Swiss lad and said, "Where is Kanderstaag?" just as people turn to a minister and ask where heaven is, and the boy's answer was the answer of every minister who knows his business: "I don't know where it is, but that is the road to it." That is the whole story, that is a summary of the philosophy of life. It makes no difference where the road ends at last, *provided* you are on the first end of it and are going steadily on your way; and the splendid faith we profess, that we have inherited, created, elaborated, that comforts us and makes us unafraid of anything that may happen, is that we do not know where the end is, but we are on "the road to it."

Given the way and the strength and the onlooking hope, there are only three things we can do: we might go back if it were an ordinary road, but that nature has forbidden; we might sit down and wait, but that the enterprise of the soul refuses; so there is nothing left but to *go on and to keep the road.*

Now we project our life on that theory. We refuse to be told of any magical process; we refuse to be brought into communion of the dead, who cannot speak grammatically in seances in which the affections of life are trifled with and debased. We refuse everything except the fact that we are part of the life of the living God, and that He cannot do without us, and the thing by which we live is that which constitutes Him the living God, not body and parts, but the nature of man, the splendid humanities that rise to beatitudes and the great hopes that "lay hold on eternal life." That is a Scripture phrase that I like to repeat: "lay hold on eternal life;" we become conscious of God when our souls become enamored of goodness. Everything else is commentary and speculation. I do not wish to know any more than that. We know God; and the existence of God carries in itself the comfort that we need. And to prove this let me remind you that the best part of the Old Testament, that part we turn to and read oftenest, confirming it by our experience and welcoming it by our hope, and clarifying it by our faith as we apply it to our experience, all that was written, or sung, or said, or lived, when the people of Israel had no speculative theory of future life at all. They had an unquenchable conviction that God is; they had an inalienable relation to the living God; He that "filled the heavens" was the ground of their hope, and in the conviction that God is, all else was carried, and they spoke to Him because He was there, they listened to Him because He spoke, their prayers were the bridge they built between the soul and God, and they needed no more than this; and it was not until they declined in power and in

faith, that they began to elaborate theories of the future life; and at the time when Jesus dawned with his great light upon the sky of the world, Persia, with its elaborate eschatology, its "doctrine of last things," had saturated what Greece had left of the mind of Israel. And what did Jesus do about it? From first to last he has no word to say of any future life in description or speculation. What did he say instead? He dealt with men as they were alive; and what was his doctrine? He claimed for himself a communion with God in which there was no dissolution, and for his disciples a like communion. "I and my Father are one; I do always those things that please him." All through the gospels and the philosophy of John there is the same great inspiring thought, that *we are now living in God;* that we are living here with God in heaven. This is the great truth with which we have to deal, and it is in the faith of this truth that we hold our immortal hope, in "THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND UPWARD AND ONWARD FOREVER!"

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT MAINTAINS (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT PUBLISHES (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT AIDS (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

IT ADMINISTERS endowments (1) for the benefit of schools and churches of the Unitarian order; (2) for the relief of poor and worthy ministers and the widows of ministers; (3) for educating young men for ministerial service; (4) for providing public lectures in centers of population; (5) for the benefit of schools for colored people in the South; and (6) for many other beneficent purposes.

IT UNITES the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

For the maintenance of these endeavors the Association depends upon the annual contributions of the churches and the friends of the cause. Contributions should be sent to the Treasurer of the Association at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

[No. 249]

UNITARIANISM AND MODERN THOUGHT

BY

REV. WILLIAM S. MORGAN, Ph.D.

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OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God
The Brotherhood of Man
The Leadership of Jesus
Salvation by Character
The Progress of Mankind
Onward and Upward Forever

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

UNITARIANISM AND MODERN THOUGHT

MODERN THOUGHT

What is modern thought? It is scientific thought. Every human being has the experience of two worlds — the internal world of thought and the external world of his sense perception. Many philosophers have contended that the inner world is all we have, for in the last analysis all we really know is our thoughts about the outer world.

There has been a great development in the things of the inner world in recent times. The department of scientific thought has made tremendous strides. Science, as we know, is an endeavor to explain and describe the manifestations of nature. It endeavors to describe and explain the affairs of this world and other worlds. Science verifies and tests, tests and verifies. It tries to reduce things to mathematics; it measures and weighs everything it can, and above all tries to find out the general law which things seem to follow. Science has built a noble temple of knowledge. In it everything is very orderly. Enter it and you will find things classified and properly arranged.

ASTRONOMY

In the astronomical department of the temple of knowledge you will find charts of the heavens, catalogues of the stars. Wonderful instruments meet our gaze — telescopes, transits and spectroscopes.

Baffling mathematics, Kepler's laws of planetary motion demonstrated, Newton's great law of gravitation verified. Here they can weigh the stars and planets in balances and use three hundred trillions of miles as a foot rule. Here in this very temple human knowledge has been led out to the infinitely great. We are made to realize that the little world in which we live is a very small place in the house of the Father in heaven. We are told it takes fifty years for the light to reach us from the north star. Wonderful universe! We can peer out of our window on a starry night and see the hosts of heaven in their splendor. Then we can think of the infinite spaces beyond and beyond; think if we had the wing of an angel and the speed of a ray of light, how we could travel beyond and beyond and never end the journey; think of the wonders that would meet our gaze. Doubtless we should meet with conscious beings on a higher scale than ourselves; there is no telling, indeed, what discoveries we should make. In any case our experience would be greatly enlarged. And here in this temple we are informed that everywhere in space we should find the laws of Kepler and Newton just as true as here on earth. And before we leave this department, after having learned how to watch a planet cross the meridian at a fraction of a minute before a certain hour, we are told that the law of gravitation does not only make the stars and planets behave as they should, but that it also keeps the atoms in their proper place. Newton's law, in other words, is just as true in the world that is infinitely small. We shall never pay our debt to men like Newton,

Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler. But we must enter another section of the temple of science.

CHEMISTRY

The chemical laboratory. What marvelous development of knowledge since Priestly, the learned parson, discovered oxygen, or what he called dephlogisticated air. Here the atoms are weighed in the balances. The chemist leads material substances a merry dance; he has really discovered the philosopher's stone for the modern manufacturer; he turns everything into gold. He is able to marshal these little atoms, and so tiny are they that no human eye has ever seen them, and yet they obey the chemist; he classifies them, groups them together almost as he pleases, gives their names and weights and tells what will happen if atoms that love each other get together, and also what will happen if atoms which hate each other get together, for you see they are just like human beings. This is the world of atoms and each atom is a little world in itself composed of wonderful electrons. But we cannot stay too long here.

PHYSICS

We cannot pass the physical department of the temple of science. Here are revealed the wonders of electricity, light and heat. Here we are told how a little ray of light can leave the sun and travel through millions of miles and reach the earth without losing its way. Again, we see measurements, wheels and balances. Here we are told of the great laws of the correlation and conservation of energy. Nothing is lost. The burnt candle has only disap-

peared from our gaze to reappear in some other form. How reassuring! Nothing can be lost, nothing destroyed. God takes care of burnt candles, shall he not take care of me? Can I be lost in this great universe? Never. But the thing that most impresses us in this department is the fact that the whole universe seems to be composed of things in motion. Sound, light and heat are forms of motion. Even in the hardest substances atoms are as much in motion as in the most plastic; as if the supreme being had infused the energy of his mind into this whole creation; as if he had said in the beginning, let there be motion, and all the forms of created things appeared in all their wonderful diversity. We must move now.

BIOLOGY

To the department of living things. Life is an entrancing subject. There is more mystery in a little flower than we can fathom for many a day. Tennyson saw this and put it in beautiful language which we must quote:

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower; but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

Here in the biological laboratory, life in all its forms, from the amœba, through the cell and processes of generation, through the kingdoms of the botanical and animal, are studied in the most wonderful fashion.

PSYCHOLOGY

But we must stop in the psychological laboratory on our way upstairs to the genetic department. The most wonderful thing on this earth is the mind of man. Lotze has called it the microcosms, the little world, and it is surely a wonderful little world. Out of this inner world comes all that we are pleased to call civilization. Science is nothing but the product of man's mind. All religion and Bibles originate in a man's soul; all the splendid philanthropy, all the great achievements of the modern world, all the art and poetry and philosophy, come from this little world. As never before in the temple of science this little world is studied, its wonderful laws, its intricate workings. We have only touched upon its mysteries. Its relation to the nervous system, its use of a brain is a life-long study in itself. Here, for my part, I should like to linger for a lifetime. But we are taking what might be called a bird's-eye view of things.

EVOLUTION

In the upper chambers of the temple of science is the most interesting department of all, that of evolution. Darwin practically created this department. After a trip of a few years around the world in H. M. S. S. Beagle and twenty years of hard work on the specimens collected, he came upon a theory of the origin of species — that is, that the different species of plants and animals had not been created as quickly as one could utter Jack Robinson, but that they had come into existence through gradual development. This was a great thing in itself to

let us know that man, for example, was not made instantly six thousand years since, as we had to believe before we knew better, but that his creation is a part of a gigantic scheme on the part of nature. Man was being created when the first bit of life appeared on this planet. Then higher and higher forms came. The fish, the reptile, the bird and mammal appeared in due time. Then through the great apes man, he of the large brain, he with a living soul in the image of God, he that can laugh and weep and reach out after the divine, he of eternal possibilities came upon this planet. We say, this in itself was a great piece of work to show us how God actually works in the creation of plants and animals. But evolution has pushed itself into every department of science. Darwin has compelled the world to think in his terms. The geologist found out that this little earth and the solar system came gradually; that the creation of the earth took untold millions of years. We are gradually discovering that the process of creation is still going on among the stars. Evolution is the great word in modern times. The development of language, of religion, of civilization and every other kind of development is studied in this department.

This then — I think I have said enough to make it clear — is what is meant by modern knowledge or scientific knowledge. It is what is called exact knowledge, verified and classified knowledge. And the whole of the modern world is colored by it. Modern man has become scientific in his mental make-up. He has developed to a wonderful degree the things of the inner world.

UNITARIANISM

What, then, is the relation of Unitarianism to the scientific habit of mind? What attitude does it assume toward science? Unitarianism is a religious force. The Unitarians gather into their churches to worship God. What attitude do they assume toward science? Are they friendly or antagonistic toward modern knowledge? We can best enunciate our attitude in a series of "We believe," keeping in mind that we are simply stating the beliefs of one Unitarian while endeavoring to show the trend of thought among us.

FREEDOM

We believe in the largest freedom for the scientific investigator for both theoretical and practical reasons. No truth of whatsoever nature can disturb the eternal realities. Every truth discovered, while it may disturb our smug traditionalism and many a notion dear to us, will, in the long run, afford a larger vision of nature and lend a greater inspiration to humanity. Freedom of scientific investigation is the result of centuries of struggle. There is nothing more conservative than an idea which we consider once for all settled. It requires the greatest type of hero to be true to a new vision and to hold to it in politics, religion, science, art, philosophy or even in such small matters as fashion in dress. The early scientists learned this to their sorrow. It was fortunate for Copernicus that his book came from the press on the day of his death; for otherwise it is probable that the kindly relief which nature afforded would have been substituted by cruel burning at the stake. The

book on "The Revolutions of the Celestial Orbs" was brought into the dying man's room; he touched it and passed away. The prison and the Inquisition did all they could to discourage Galileo. What vituperation was heaped upon Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, especially by the members of his own medical profession! He did not expect any man over forty to accept his theory. He was probably satisfied on this point. Yet within thirty years his theory found general acceptance. Hobbes, his friend, said it was unusual for the advocate of a great theory to see it accepted during his lifetime. Probably there is no example in recent times more remarkable than the attitude of the public, and especially the clergy, toward the theory of natural selection by Charles Darwin. The vituperation that was heaped upon this man in the name of Christianity for enunciating a simple biological truth, accepted universally to-day by the scientific world, is indeed a commentary on the kind of religion people in general possess. The moment Darwin said that we had descended by a gradual process from the lower animals, the Christian world found at once that it loved the dust of the earth very supremely. It was greater glory to have descended from unorganized dust than to have descended through the magnificent forms of life which had come from the hands of the creator. But we are living in the large and charitable air. Scientific discoveries occur constantly among us now and we take them for granted. We no longer wait for the next generation to appraise the work of the scientist — we claim that right here and now. When the X-ray appeared in the Crookes' tube there was no attempt to castigate Madame Curie

and her husband. Marconi was idolized as soon as he flashed the first letter across the Atlantic by means of wireless telegraphy; that is much better than burning our Marconis. Aerial navigation could not have taken place in the middle ages without its being connected with the work of the devil and his angels, and there is no telling what the fate of the flying man would be. We take it as a matter of course, and that is very proper.

ETERNAL REALITY

Any discovery of truth cannot injure eternal reality. When Newton discovered the law of gravitation, even men of the intelligence of the great John Wesley were afraid he was going to drive God out of his world. We know to-day that such a thing is impossible. Gravitation is God's way of holding things together. We must not forget, however, that our notions of God have been enlarging. Science has driven out of the world the gods of the heathen and the smaller God of an earlier generation. Lalande swept the heavens with his telescope and reported that he found no God there; there was none to be found by the telescope. I suppose he expected to find God in the form of a man seated upon a throne in some point of space, and he was disappointed. Such a God would be too small for the purposes of an infinite universe. God is to us —

> "A sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

Such a God cannot be excluded from nature. His dwelling-place is in the atom as well as in the stars and in the inter-stellar spaces. He is present in the storm, fire and earthquake as well as in the small still voice. He is the beauty of the landscape; He glimmers in every sunbeam; He is the ebb and flow of the tide; the various forces of nature are but a manifestation of his power; He is the energy within all energy, the force within all force, and every law traces His footsteps. Such a notion is sublime. Drive such a God out of the universe! This makes every land a Palestine. This makes every human soul a tabernacle of the infinite. This makes God the internal force of the whole creation and not something standing on the outside watching it go. And thus we say to every man of science: Find out all you can about this wonderful universe, for every discovery will reveal something to us about the indwelling God.

PRACTICAL VALUE OF SCIENCE

The practical value of scientific discovery is incalculable. Our modern life in all its wealth of blessings we owe largely to the men who have toiled in laboratories, worked in observatories, the great heroes who are devoting their lives to the cause of science. We bid them all Godspeed. They are co-workers with God.

The love of truth which scientific work makes a condition and a contagion could well be copied by the religious thinkers of the world. While science has been erecting a noble temple of knowledge upon the eternal foundations of truth, and has gained the respect and the admiration of the modern world, the

church has largely lost its influence because it has cared more for tradition and accepted opinion than truth. It has failed, or at least it has been reluctant, in seeing that science has been writing the pages of a new Bible; that nature to-day is revealing more God to us than ever before. The church has opposed, much to its discredit, every great scientific discovery in the past and has taken a prominent place in the persecution of scientific workers and in frustrating the new light of knowledge. It is full time for the church to ally itself with modern thought, strip off its antiquated trappings, learn the accent of modern thought and lead humanity to see the eternal reality that science has unfolded for us.

SPIRITUAL MEANINGS OF SCIENCE

We believe there is an obligation laid upon the religious thinker to interpret the spiritual meanings of science. There has been much talk about the antagonism of science and religion. There is no such antagonism. They are co-workers. They are different ways of looking at nature. Consider the jonquil, this joy of early spring. The artist might behold it and appreciate the impression of beauty it leaves upon his mind. He might transmit his appreciation of it to his canvas. Any beholder that can appreciate the beautiful might find pleasure in an object of such delicate form and coloring. A Linnaeus might write a whole book of botany about it and describe its wonderful structure and classification. When Linnaeus watched it blooming he said he saw the glory of God go by. In that experience he was a religious soul. He did not see the flower as an artist or a scientist, but as one who appre-

ciated the divine in nature. "Consider the lily of the field," said Jesus; that is, think of it as a religious soul; think how God has clothed it in a garment more gorgeous than anything worn at the court of Solomon. To consider the lily from the viewpoint of the artist or the scientist is perfectly proper, and just as proper to consider it from the view-point of the religious soul. Nature has a religious heart, and it is perfectly proper that we feel its great throbbing pulse and respond to its appeal. There is no antagonism in these essential relations. They are different aspects of the same thing. Science is a thing of measurement and balance, a thing of classification and verification, something that is exact, impersonal; religion is a thing of ideal reach, something that is personal, something that considers nature in the light of the ideals, hopes and aspirations of humanity.

SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY

There has been antagonism enough between science and theology. Whole volumes have been written about it. Medicine has had to fight her battles every step of the way. Nowhere has the conquest been greater than in the treatment of the insane, which theology insisted belonged to the devil or a set of devils. Demoniacal possession was the theological diagnosis of insanity. Geology for a time had a hard struggle to persuade the theologian that it took more than six thousand years to form the gorge of Niagara. In some mysterious way the short term of the existence of the earth was considered necessary for the theological scheme of things. Theologians looked askance at Spencer, Darwin and Hux-

ley, for these gentlemen made it very uncomfortable for certain notions held sacred. Science thus has played havoc with immaculate conceptions, the miraculous in every form, incarnations, resurrections, ascensions and what not, but the gain is infinitely greater than the loss. Religion is eternal. Theologies will come and go; they must be adjusted to the thinking of each generation. And it is our business, the moment our theology gets outworn, to reconstruct it over and over again, so that the impedimenta of the intellect may not balk the religious heart of man in its appreciation of nature and life.

SPIRITUAL MEANING OF EVOLUTION

Much needless labor has been wasted in the endeavor to prevent the evolutionist from leading us into materialism. To me there is no greater demonstration of the spiritual side of things than the beautiful theory of evolution. I cannot for the life of me see how any one can be a materialist and at the same time an evolutionist. It is the most spiritual theory I know. It assumes that every object of this wonderful creation has been evolved out of what Spencer called the inscrutable power of the universe. Nowhere, it seems to me, is a great purpose more apparent than evolution reveals to us. Think of this world in the state of a boiling cauldron, yet in this molten mass was the promise and potency of all that was to come. Think of the magnificence of the purpose that could arrange for trees and flowers and blades of grass; arrange for water, earth and air; arrange for Shakespeares, Platos and Newtons; arrange for mothers, and an infinite variety of life forms; arrange for the crystals

and metals; arrange for it all in this seething mass of fire. Nature is full of purpose. It moves on majestically from the lower to the higher stage. It knows what it is about. Materialism! What is matter? Matter is alive with the presence of mind. It is only the manifestation of mind. The power that has formed the bewitching tracery of the moss, the splendid structure of the tree, the human soul, the glory of the earth, is a power with an intelligence that baffles our grasp. In the story of evolution we simply trace the movements of the infinite mind from one stage of existence to another. Purpose is something that belongs to mind; if we detect such a comprehensive purpose as is made known to us by evolution, have we not come across something that can very consistently be called the supreme mind of the universe?

GOD ALL IN ALL

But this brings us to the very heart of our subject, for we come upon the very heart of the unseen world. Science deals with particular things and particular laws underlying these things; it does not pretend to deal with the great principles underlying the entire universe. But science, of necessity, leads us to inquire what is the great reality in it all. Science discovers order and unity everywhere. Things seem to work wonderfully well together. There seems to be a general purpose that appears in it all. What does this purpose indicate? What does this unity mean? Our Unitarianism, in common with all Christians, teaches us that the purpose is the purpose of the universal spirit. The unity is the unity of a self-conscious mind. This spirit, this mind, we

call God. God is what Herbert Spencer called the Unknowable; Kant called it a thing in itself; Jews and Christians call it the Father in heaven; Matthew Arnold called it "The power not ourselves in the universe making for righteousness;" Paul calls it "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all;" it could very aptly be called the great silence. This is what our religion upon its mystical side loves to worship. This on the practical side is what expresses itself in our lives as righteousness among men. This is the great fount of the inspiration of our life. This is the power that inspires poetry and music and art and science and philosophy and religion and every form of the ideal in human souls. Science then gives us facts; religion imparts the ideal. Science gives us the laws of nature; religion brings us face to face with the great reality whose workings science traces in these laws. Science teaches us the use of the intellect pre-eminently; religion as we see it teaches us the use of the entire soul, intellect, emotion, volition. Science is a method of understanding nature; religion teaches us to enter into communion with the power manifested in nature. We need all that science can give; we shall rejoice in all its conquests. We believe in a religion that will square itself uncompromisingly with scientific results. We believe in the possibility of the religious attitude without doing violence to the scientific spirit. Religion deals with the last word of science, its ultimate reality at first hand, and takes note of all that is tender and fine, every heart-beat and divine instinct of the human soul.

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25 Beacon Street, Boston.

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT MAINTAINS (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT PUBLISHES (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT AIDS (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

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IT UNITES the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

For the maintenance of these endeavors the Association depends upon the annual contributions of the churches and the friends of the cause. Contributions should be sent to the Treasurer of the Association at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

[No. 250]

THE PERIL OF PAGANISM

BY

REV. AUGUSTUS P. RECCORD

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God
The Brotherhood of Man
The Leadership of Jesus
Salvation by Character
The Progress of Mankind
Onward and Upward Forever

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE PERIL OF PAGANISM

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, *as the custom of some is.* Hebrews x: 25.

A study of words is often a study of civilization. The form may remain the same but the content will vary from age to age. This is especially true of two words which we often use without thought of their derivation or original meaning. They are the words "Pagan" and "Heathen." One is Latin in its origin, the other German, but both meant the same at the outset, passed through similar processes of change and mean essentially the same today. When Christianity was introduced into the Roman empire, it gained its first victories in the cities. The rural districts were for the most part untouched. There the pagan,— the dweller in the pagus, or country,— preserved the old superstitions and beliefs and observed the ancient festivals and feasts almost without change. And so, when Christianity became the state religion, the word pagan took on a new meaning. It denoted impiety as well as rusticity. And when, later still, Christianity had established itself in the country districts as well as in the great centres of population, its original meaning was lost altogether. The pagan was no longer the countryman, but the non-Christian. He might live in Rome itself, but if he refused to accept the new religion and clung to the faith of his forbears, he was a pagan.

The word heathen has experienced a similar change of meaning. Originally it had no religious

significance whatsoever. It meant simply a heath-dweller,—one who inhabited the open country. As Christianity was accepted by one city after another and superstition and idolatry became more and more confined to the country regions, the word became synonymous with impiety and irreligion. Finally all remembrance of its original meaning was lost and it was applied with equal facility to country dweller and city dweller. A heathen was a German pagan; a pagan was an Italian heathen. And so it is today. The words are interchangeable. They may mean either a member of a tribe or nation cut off from Christian influences and associations, or a member of a Christian community who persists in living in un-Christian and irreligious ways.

It is obvious that it is in this second sense that we use the words today. Paganism in the first sense is no longer a menace to civilization. Because of the widespread activity of Christian missions it is no longer possible for any nation to keep itself wholly aloof from Christian influences. The German emperor may try to rally the Christian nations of Europe in a determined stand against the "yellow peril," but that peril is largely a spectre of the imperial mind. By the time any Asiatic people shall have become powerful enough to in any way affect the peace of Europe, it will have become so far Christianized that its entrance into the international arena will involve no peril to Christian institutions. Today the peril of paganism is of another sort. It comes from the increasing number of men and women who continue to dwell in the midst of a Christian civilization and yet insist upon their right to live their own lives regardless of the effect upon Chris-

tian practices or Christian institutions. Their interest in the institutional side of religion is no more apparent than if they lived in darkest Africa or remotest India. If their attitude should ever become universal, churches would close their doors for lack of worshippers, religious institutions would suspend activity for lack of support, and religion itself would persist only as a vague sentiment in constant danger of disappearing altogether.

We have had, recently, striking confirmation of the fact that this is no imaginary danger. Statistics have been compiled showing that while there has been an increase in church-membership, there has been a decline in church attendance. The recognition of the church as serving a useful purpose in the community and therefore worthy of perfunctory support is as widespread as ever, but the church-going habit has lost its hold upon large numbers of men and women. No religion has ever yet flourished without being dependent upon institutions for the preservation of its integrity and the extension of its power. This is as true of the Christian religion as of any other. The conclusion is inevitable that unless something can be done to bring about a revival of the church-going habit, the church must suffer a loss of strength and vitality and the religious interests of every community be correspondingly affected.

The prevalence of this type of paganism involves a threefold peril. First, it involves a peril for those who refuse to avail themselves of the opportunity for religious expression which the church affords. It is as true of the religious faculty as of any other that it atrophies through disuse. Not

to use it is to lose it. We cannot disguise the fact that there is, growing up in many an American community, a group of young men and women of otherwise exemplary character whose habits of life are gradually unfitting them to take any vital part in the religious life of the community in the coming years. When a young man who never darkens the doors of a church or other religious institution from year's end to year's end asserts that he finds it increasingly difficult to become interested in religious literature or in the problems of the religious life, the reason is not far to seek. He is allowing the highest and noblest faculty with which man is endowed to perish through lack of exercise. Will such a man accept the responsibility for the perpetuation of Christian institutions when those who are now bearing that responsibility are compelled to lay it down?

Secondly, the present situation is fraught with peril for the church. The existence of such groups in any community, without self-condemnation or public reproach, not only deprives the church of the support which is its due and imposes upon others the obligation to bear the added burdens which such spiritual pauperism always entails, but it also makes it increasingly difficult to inculcate habits of church attendance in those of a younger generation who are prone to imitate their elders and do not always discriminate between a good example and a bad. If men are responsible for their influence as well as for their overt acts, then there is a tremendous responsibility resting upon any man whose manner of life serves to create an atmosphere of religious indifference and irresponsibility.

Thirdly, the situation involves a peril to the community as a whole. These modern pagans are making no provision for the perpetuation of the very influences which have made them what they are and which, even today, stand between them and the full fruitage of the pagan life. They are still living upon the spiritual momentum acquired from years of religious training provided for them by devout parents. But who will provide the religious training for their children? What will atone for the complete absence of a religious atmosphere in their homes? What can counteract the influence of parents who ask the church to bless the marriage vow and then proceed to sacrifice everything for which the church stands upon the altar of an undisguised paganism? And what of the future of the institutions in which such people are often interested and which depend upon the church to keep alive the spirit of humanitarianism of which they are but the expression and to provide them with men and women who shall organize and direct their efforts? Whatever weakens the one institution which seeks to train men for social efficiency strikes a blow at every institution which ministers to social well-being.

Now it is self-evident that church-going can never again be regarded as an end in itself. It can justify itself only as a means to an end which all men recognize as essential to the completeness of human life. If once more it is to become a habit among us, it must spring from motives which are quite different from those which actuated the men of other days. They regarded it almost in the light of a sacrament. It was looked upon as having a sort of divine efficacy. Men saw in it a means of grace and an assurance

of salvation. Today such an interpretation of it is discredited. Instead of regarding church-going as a means of salvation, we admit frankly that we have no interest in any salvation which is conditioned by anything else than growth in goodness. The church saves men only as it contributes to this end.

The decline of this ancient motive brought two others to the front. One was the force of tradition, which associated church-going with habits of piety and devotion. Men went to church because their fathers had gone before them and because it was still looked upon as an indication of decency and self-respect. The force of tradition, however, can never perpetuate a custom when once men convince themselves that it no longer answers to any distinctively human need. Men who depend upon the force of habit to lead them to church are always among the first to acquire the habit of staying at home. The second supplementary motive was self culture. Men went to church because once, at least, each week they desired to have some one of the pressing problems of life seriously and impartially considered. Today this end is served in so many other ways, through the spread of educational facilities and through the multiplication of books and papers and magazines, that men are no longer dependent upon the church for this purpose.

Side by side with the decay of the old motives for church attendance there has been the multiplication of excuses for non-attendance. One desires the day as a day of rest, oblivious of the fact that there is nothing which so restores the over-wrought muscle and the over-taxed brain as a quiet hour spent in the temple of God, far away from the distracting

cares of the world and in communion with the things of the spirit. Another feels that he must devote the day to physical recreation, to outdoor exercise, in spite of the fact that all authorities agree that, for the man who is not engaged in violent physical activity during the week, there is far more danger of too much exertion on Sunday than of too little. One hour devoted to the exercise of the otherwise unused spiritual powers and faculties would leave ample time for all the physical exercise that is consistent with health. Still a third justifies his neglect of the institution of public worship by the plea that he has passed beyond the need of it and that it is no longer essential to his spiritual health. Unfortunately this plea is seldom heard from the lips of one whose spiritual robustness is at all evident to his fellow men. It is more often urged by those whose lives reveal a lack of moral earnestness and spiritual power. And then there are those who disclaim any need of religious worship for themselves but attend church at infrequent intervals because of the beneficent effect of their example upon others. Such cases of "altruistic worship" are few and are steadily becoming fewer. Men will not continue, for others, a practice which has ceased to have value for themselves.

It is easy to see that all these are mere excuses. They present no adequate reason for the neglect of a habit which others accept as a duty and which all ought to look upon as a privilege. The real reason lies underneath these surface indications. Religion is as natural as life, and if the church, which stands for organized religion, does not retain its hold upon the allegiance of men and women, it

must be because of some circumstance or condition which makes such allegiance difficult, if not impossible. The first of these conditions is the growing complexity of human life, the multiplication of interests and activities, each of them taking time and thought and attention and tending to divert people from regular and systematic expression of the religious life. It is not alone the church but every institution which ministers to the higher life of man which suffers from this over-crowding. Art, literature, music and all similar expressions of that higher life share the indifference and neglect which is experienced by religion. And this suggests a partial remedy. Anything which tends to relieve life of this overpressure and to restore simplicity and sanity in our daily living will afford some alleviation. If we could only accustom ourselves to live less strenuously during the week, we should find ourselves in a better mood for religious expression on Sunday.

The second circumstance which has tended to alienate even genuinely religious men from the church is the conviction that it has neglected to keep pace with other human interests and to adapt itself to the new conditions which each succeeding age imposes. To men living and working in the present its message has seemed too often a mere echo of the past. Men have grown intellectually and in every other department of life their growing intelligence has been permitted to register itself. Not so in religion. Here alone progress has been declared impossible and religious conceptions which were the product of a primitive civilization have been deemed sufficient to meet the spiritual needs of the mature men and women of today.

In addition to this purely intellectual difficulty there has been the moral. Christian practice has always lagged far behind Christian theory. In our profession we have acknowledged our devotion to the highest ideals of thought and life; in our practice we have often given evidence of a very recent emergence from barbarism. The church has defined Christianity as a life rather than a creed. It has asserted that the Christian life consists in doing the will of God rather than in vain repetitions of "Lord, Lord." But when men have asked where they could find a realization of this life, where they could find a group of men and women actuated only by the desire to do the will of God, the church has not always been able to give a satisfactory answer. It has been well said that "the greatest obstacle to the growth of the Christian church has been the insufficiency of Christian lives." Dishonesty in business, corruption in politics, superficiality in our social life and insincerity in our religious professions have served to make Christianity a mockery. There is little wonder that a Chinese ambassador was led to the conclusion that the great difference between Confucianism and the Christian religion is that one is capable of being practiced while the other is not.

Furthermore, while liberal Christianity has succeeded in removing the intellectual contradictions by proclaiming a message which is more in accord with modern thought, it has been clearly demonstrated by the editor of the Hibbert Journal that it has not been equally successful in removing the ethical contradictions. Is it true that our churches are sufficiently in touch with the needs of the communities in which they are placed? Are they power houses

or preaching stations? Are our people as willing as they ought to be to serve the common weal? Does the church as it is organized today offer the best channel through which men may make their influence count on the side of righteousness and truth? And if not, can we wonder that men do not come flocking to its doors eager to enlist in its work? It means something when men who will give hours and days to the service of some institution which makes a direct and immediate contribution to the welfare of the community, refuse to render the slightest service to the church or to the community in its name. It means that, while the church has always been the mother of welfare institutions and creates today the atmosphere of brotherliness and humanity of which they are but the expression and without which they could not endure a day, yet it has failed to make that fact so luminous that he who runs may read.

Here again a knowledge of the cause suggests the cure. It is time that men should be brought face to face with their duty to the church in their respective communities. Our first duty is to cultivate the habit of religious expression as something indispensable to spiritual health and vigor. We must accustom ourselves to look upon church attendance as a Sabbath-day obligation, something which we would not omit for any reason which would not justify us in breaking a business engagement. If made habitual, the task is easy. If made occasional, contingent upon something else, then that something else is sure to occur, thwart our good intentions and add one more to the number of stay-at-homes.

Our second duty is to make the church a more

efficient power for good in the community. It ought to be known that here is a body of men and women so filled with love for God and enthusiasm for humanity that no worthy cause can appeal to them in vain. And it ought to be made evident that if men wish to do a good work for their fellow men, they cannot afford to deny themselves the inspiration and the practical direction which the church is prepared to give. It is in its hours of religious worship that it finds the motive power for its days of practical effort. Communion and fellowship with God stimulate the desire to hasten the coming of his kingdom. If every Christian church could but meet these conditions, if Christian people everywhere would cultivate the habit of regular and systematic religious worship and find in it the inspiration for their daily work, the time would soon come when not to attend church and to support the church would be equivalent to a confession of indifference to the highest interests of the community. The man who made such a confession would be known far and wide as a pagan, living on, a relic of a selfish past, in the midst of a Christian, and therefore altruistic and humane, civilization.

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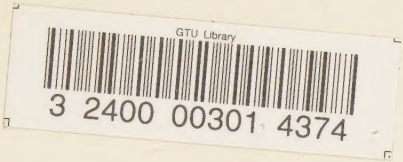

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